DE QUINCEY'S COLLECTED WRITINGS

VOL. VIII

SPECULATIVE AND THEOLOGICAL ESSAYS

THE

COLLECTED WRITINGS

OF

THOMAS DE QUINCEY

BY

DAVID MASSON

EMERITUS PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LITERATURE
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

VOL. VIII

LONDON
A. & C. BLACK, SOHO SQUARE
1897

CONTENTS OF VOL. VIII

	PAGE
EDITOR'S PREFACE	1
SYSTEM OF THE HEAVENS, AS REVEALED BY LORD ROSSE'S TELESCOPES	7
POSTSCRIPT: ON THE TRUE RELATIONS OF THE BIBLE TO MERELY HUMAN SCIENCE	35
PLATO'S REPUBLIC	42
POSTSCRIPT	82
KANT IN HIS MISCELLANEOUS ESSAYS	84
GLANCE AT THE WORKS OF MACKINTOSH	127
MIRACLES AS SUBJECTS OF TESTIMONY	157
POSTSCRIPT	176
JUDAS ISCARIOT	177
ON CHRISTIANITY AS AN ORGAN OF POLITICAL MOVEMENT	207
PROTESTANTISM	244
CASUISTRY	310
ON WAR	369
POSTSCRIPT	393
ON SUICIDE	398
MODERN SUPERSTITION	404

EDITOR'S PREFACE

THE title chosen for this Volume expresses very fairly the nature of its contents. It consists of De Quincey's occasional excursions on his own account, apart from certain translations of his from the German, into those questions of Metaphysics and Ethics which constitute what is usually regarded as Philosophy proper, or as Philosophy in connexion with Theology.

The opening Essay, entitled *System of the Heavens as revealed by Lord Rosse's Telescopes*, though standing in some respects by itself, is yet a very fit introduction to the rest. While it is interesting as an eloquent exposition of some abstruse points in astronomical science, its chief value, both in De Quincey's intention and actually, consists in its sketching out exactly that kind of general vision of sidereal immensity which most surely compels the mind into the mood of metaphysical wonder and musing. De Quincey has himself remarked on the strange fact that people in general in these days have contracted a habit of always looking sideways or downwards, so that it is but an exceptional few that, in a walk in a city street or on a country road in the most splendid of starry nights, ever lift their eyes to the rolling glories overhead. It is perhaps but the same thing in another shape that, while there is such a unanimous passion at present for the systematic inclusion of Chemistry and the various Biological Sciences in the business of education, Astronomy, which is the most soul-dilating of all the sciences, and was in past centuries the one all-sufficing form of cosmography taught in schools and colleges, has passed now into compara-

tive neglect. The specific virtue of De Quincey's paper is that it tends to counteract this neglect of the physically vast. With a general effect resembling that of Chalmers's Astronomical Discourses, though after another fashion, it impresses once more that lesson of awe and amazement which has been taught to all generations of mortal men more emphatically by the spectacle of the spangled heavens than by anything else, and more emphatically than ever in these later generations, when the fretted roof of the old familiar firmament has been burst, and the universe of worlds and starry systems which we are called upon to conceive has receded into utter boundlessness, and therefore into racking defiance of all conceivability whatever. The very portion of the paper which some will condemn as but a daringly intruded whimsy, out of keeping with the context,—the conversion of one momentary aspect of the Nebula in Orion into a hideous living fiend or phantasm, like Milton's Death, imaginable as tenanting one ill-fated tract of the immeasurable depths of space,—might be justified perhaps on some such principle as that, when the human mind is irremediably baffled in the conception of any physical reality, it has a right to revenge itself by some moral or poetical substitute. At all events, this passage increases the impressiveness of the paper, and is the surest to remain in the memory. But it is certainly an addition which Shakespeare would never have anticipated to *his* sweeter cosmological inventory of

> "all things rare
> That Heaven's air in this huge rondure hems."

The appended Postscript *On the True Relations of the Bible to merely Human Science* connects itself naturally enough with the matter of the preceding paper, but is of wider application. It expounds an idea of De Quincey's on the subject of Biblical Inspiration well worthy of more attention from theologians than it has yet received. The idea reappears in a later paper in the present volume.

Of the paper entitled *Plato's Republic* one has to give a mixed opinion. So far as it is an onslaught, from the point of view of Christian morality, on the *ethics* of Plato's Republic, one has nothing to object; but, as it chances to be an

onslaught also virtually on Plato in general, one has to register one's dissent. Briefly, it is not to De Quincey that one must go for even an approach to an adequate appreciation of this supreme Greek representative of the Transcendental Philosophy, this most spacious and gorgeous intellect of all Pagan antiquity. While this is a disappointment, it is also a surprise. It is an old maxim that every man, whether he knows it or not, is born either a Platonist or an Aristotelian. Less familiar perhaps is the physiological fancy that each man's predestined character in this respect is indicated by the very shape of his thumbs ; but I have seen the fancy put to the test in a company of young students,—those who had flat, spatular, prosaic thumbs voted to be the Aristotelians of the company, while such as had thumbs curved upwards artistically at the tips were discerned by that mark to be indubitably the Platonists. Now, if any man ever had the Platonic thumb, or whatever else is the true physiological indication, it was surely De Quincey. And yet, as we see, his attitude to the world's master-mind of his own type was, if not that of positive aversion, at least that of defective liking and very stinted admiration. One is sorry for the fact ; but it cannot be helped. In this case, somehow or other, De Quincey's mind was blocked, and its faculty of intellectual appreciation stiffened, by a needless fury of ethical orthodoxy. The imaginary polygamy and what not else in Plato's ideal Republic so moved De Quincey's loathing that, like the most ordinary and matter-of-fact little Christian in any half-educated conventicle, he behaved as if the whole of Plato was summed up in this one extravagance, and assaulted him accordingly. The assaulted seraph may have been really wounded in one wing ; but what of that ?

> "*Six* wings *he* wore, to shade
> His lineaments divine."

Passing to the next two articles, we recover our confidence. In *Kant in his Miscellaneous Essays* there is a good deal of information that will be new yet to most British readers respecting Kant personally, his religious and political beliefs, and the subjects of some of his minor writings. Similarly instructive is the *Glance at the Works of Mackintosh.*

Here also particular parts of the writings of the philosopher reviewed are singled out for report and comment. Two of the sections of the paper, it is true, are on historical or literary problems; but the speculative element prevails in the other sections.

The four papers which follow constitute together the more expressly *theological* portion of the contents of the volume. They are of different aims and characters, however, as well as of different degrees of merit. In *Miracles as subjects of Testimony* De Quincey has his say, after so many predecessors, on Hume's once famous argument against miracles. There is ability, of course, in his counter-argument; but it is decidedly supersubtle,—too fine-spun and algebraic to be really effective. One observes, too, that the strange little Postscript, if it does not actually cancel what has preceded, forms but a lame ending. There is nothing lame or algebraic or indistinct in the immediately succeeding Essay, entitled *Judas Iscariot*. Here De Quincey is on solid historical ground. He challenges the ordinary tradition respecting Judas, which makes him out to have been a vulgar and mercenary wretch, and supports that very different view of his character, propounded by some German theologians, and also by one or two English, which conceives him to have been an ambitious disciple of Christ who, after having vainly tried to precipitate his master into a rupture with the Roman government and the assumption of a Jewish sovereignty in his own person, saw no refuge for himself, amid the horrors of the actual result, but suicide. The purport of the Essay entitled *Christianity as an Organ of Political Movement* is much more extensive. The matter, however, is not in perfectly exact correspondence with the title. Beginning with a contemplation of Christianity in its infancy as the appearance in the world of a ferment of new doctrines, supernaturally revealed, that was to go on working until it should have revolutionised the whole system of human society, the Essay is content for a while to leave the working of the ferment to the mere imagination of the reader; and it is not till towards the end that it proceeds to the specification of some of the more important political and social changes which Christianity has actually brought about

or to which it is still leading. All the intermediate part is taken up with a vehement indictment of the Pagan Religions that preceded Christianity. Language almost fails De Quincey in expressing his detestation of those Pagan Religions. False religions, dark religions, abominable religions, all of them; that of the Greeks and Romans composed of a monstrous mythology full of pollutions, amid which the more brutal of the worshippers might wallow at their will, while the utmost that higher and more sceptical spirits could do was to extract now and then some prettyish symbol from the collective rubbish and pay it the compliment of wearing it as one wears a flower in one's button-hole: such is De Quincey's representation in this Essay, as in every other part of his writings where he treats of the same subject. Nothing here, it will be seen, of the modern scientific notion of a certain respectability, more or less, in all religions. If De Quincey ever heard of this notion, he was obstinate as a mule against it, and stood out stiffly for the old-fashioned Christian tradition. Hence, with all the eloquence of the present Essay, and all its truth in parts, there will be a demur to it as not doing sufficient justice to the Classic Paganism of so many memorable centuries. Might there not have been a fairer historical estimate, it will be asked, of the actual influence of the Polytheistic mythology on the hearts and imaginations of those dead millions who were nurtured in it, or at least some hints towards a more subtle appreciation of that essential peculiarity of the Polytheistic habit of thought which manifested itself, as we see so strikingly in the choruses of the Greek tragedies, in the invocation, in all emergencies, not of one god or goddess, but first of one, then of another, then of a third, then of any others in whom there seemed likelihood, till sometimes the close was in a kind of despairing hurry-skurry of appeal for help to all the gods pell-mell?—

"Come Ronald, come Donald; come a' thegither!"

Those who may take leave of the general Essay on Christianity with some such feeling as has been described will find more satisfaction in the Essay entitled *Protestantism*. It is in a much more modern style of thinking, and is, all in

all, the ablest and most elaborate of the four Essays in this volume classed as expressly theological. It is here that De Quincey opens out most fully that idea of his as to the true theory of Inspiration which appears in condensed form, as has been remarked, in the Postscript to his astronomical paper. Although it is forty-three years since this rather important speculation of De Quincey's was published, it does not seem even yet, I repeat, to have received the amount of attention that might have been expected for it in quarters where the Inspiration Controversy is still agitated.

In the remaining papers of the volume De Quincey moves out of the specially theological field, and back into that of free ethical or ethico-metaphysical inquiry. A fixed notion of his having been that the science of Ethics has been impeded and impoverished in Protestant countries by perpetual adhesion to mere generalities, and by the absence of any means equivalent to that provided by the Romish confessional for applying general axioms of right and wrong to individual cases of practical difficulty and intricacy, he has expounded this notion pretty largely, and with considerable exemplification, in the paper entitled *Casuistry*. In the paper *On War* there is a separate and additional exemplification on that topic, rather stragglingly pursued, and with a result on the main question that will stagger philanthropists, but opening with one of those passages of fine phantasy, so peculiarly De Quincey's, which can be detached from his writings, whatever the context, and admired by themselves as literary gems. The little paper *On Suicide* is a supplementary morsel on the casuistry of that hard question. Finally, though the paper entitled *Modern Superstition* is mainly a string of historical anecdotes illustrating the persistence of belief in omens, supernatural coincidences, and the like, there is a sufficient tinge of the speculative or metaphysical throughout the anecdotes to justify the inclusion of that paper also in the present volume.

D. M.

SYSTEM OF THE HEAVENS

AS REVEALED BY LORD ROSSE'S TELESCOPES [1]

SEVERAL years ago, some person or other (in fact, I believe it was myself) published a paper from the German of Kant on a very interesting question—viz. the age of our own little

[1] First printed in *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* for September 1846: reprinted by De Quincey, with some changes, in 1854, in Vol. III of his Collective Edition of his writings. The paper was originally in the form of a notice of a book, published in 1846, under the title, "*Thoughts on some Important Points relating to the System of the World. By J. P. Nichol, LL.D., Professor of Astronomy in the University of Glasgow.*" The publisher of the book was Mr. William Tait, the proprietor of the magazine in which the notice appeared; and the author,—John Pringle Nichol (1804-1859),—was an intimate friend of De Quincey, perhaps the most intimate of all his Glasgow friends. He is well remembered still as a man of fine abilities, specially lucid and eloquent in his popular expositions of scientific subjects, whether in lectures or in writings. Publications of his preceding the book above mentioned, and now rather scarce, had been *Views of the Architecture of the Heavens* and *Contemplations on the Solar System*; and subsequent publications of his, also rather scarce now, were *The Planet Neptune*, *The Stellar Universe*, and *The Planetary System*. On republishing the paper in 1854, De Quincey, after naming in a footnote the book which had furnished him with his text, extended the footnote thus:—"In obedience to the facts of the case, "I have indicated this particular work of my friend Professor Nichol's "as having furnished—because in some imperfect sense it really *did* "furnish—the text to which this little paper refers, and about which "it may be said to hover. But it would be doing great injustice to "the learned professor if I should authorise the reader to accept so "desultory a paper as an adequate and formal *review* of that work; "and it would be doing some injustice to myself if I were supposed "to have ever designed it for discharging such a function. Grave "and scientific reviews of that book were sure to be written in useless

Earth. Those who have never seen that paper—a class of unfortunate people whom I suspect to form the majority in our present perverse generation [1]—will be likely to misconceive its object. Kant's purpose was not to ascertain how many years the Earth had lived: no such barren conundrum occupied *him*. For, had there ever been any means of coercing the Earth into an honest answer on such a delicate point,—which the Sicilian canon, Recupero, fancied that there was,[2] but which, in my own opinion, there neither is, nor ought to be (since a man deserves to be cudgelled who could put such improper questions to a *lady* planet),—still what would it amount to? What good would it do us to have a certificate of our dear little mother's birth and baptism? To tell us the *positive* amount of years through which our Earth has existed—fifty millions, for example—would leave us in total darkness upon Kant's question: viz. What proportion does that amount form of the total career allotted to this planet?

"abundance. And I, for my own part, if otherwise qualified for "writing such a review, should have felt no ambition for swelling a "catalogue already certain of being in excess. My purpose was "humbler, but also higher—viz. this: from amongst the many rela- "tions of astronomy—1, to man, 2, to his earthly habitation, 3, to "the motions of his daily life, 4, to his sense of illimitable grandeur, "5, to his dim anticipations of changes far overhead concurrently "with changes on earth—to select such as might allow of a solemn "and impassioned, or of a gay and playful, treatment. If, through "the light torrent *spray* of fanciful images or allusions, the reader "catches at intervals momentary glimpses of objects vast and awful "in the rear, a much more impressive effect is likely to be obtained "than through any amount of scientific discussion, and, at any rate, "all the effect that ever was contemplated."—M.

[1] The paper thus whimsically referred to was a very early contribution of De Quincey's to *Tait's Magazine*,—having appeared in 1833 in the "First Series" of that periodical, under the title "Age of the Earth," and professing to be a "Digest" from Kant rather than a translation.—M.

[2] "*Recupero*":—See "Brydone's Travels," some sixty or seventy years ago. [*Tour through Sicily and Malta*, by Patrick Brydone, 1773.—M.] The canon, being a beneficed clergyman in the Papal Church, was naturally an infidel. He wished exceedingly to refute Moses; and he fancied that he really *had* done so by means of some collusive assistance from the layers of lava on Mount Etna. But there survives, at this day, very little to remind us of the canon, except an unpleasant guffaw that rises, at times, in solitary valleys of Etna.

Is it the thousandth part, or the millionth? Our mother Tellus, beyond all doubt, is a lovely little thing. At any rate, therefore, she cannot be superannuated. I am satisfied that she is very much admired throughout the Solar System; and, in clear seasons, when she is seen to advantage, with her bonny wee pet of a Moon tripping round her like a lamb, I should be glad to see the planet that could fancy herself entitled to sneeze at our Earth. And then, if she (viz. our Earth) keeps but one Moon, even *that* (you know) is an advantage as regards some people that keep none.

Meantime, what Kant understood by his question is something that still remains to be developed. It is this:— Let the earth have lived any number of years that you suggest, still that tells us nothing about the *period* of life, the *stage*, which she may be supposed to have reached. Is she a child, in fact, or is she an adult? And, *if* an adult, and that you gave a ball to the Solar System, is she that kind of person that you would introduce to a waltzing partner, some fiery young gentleman like Mars; or would you rather suggest to her the sort of partnership which takes place at a whist-table? Some think that our planet is in that stage of her life which corresponds to the playful period of twelve or thirteen in a spirited girl. Such a girl, were it not that she is checked by a sweet natural sense of feminine reserve, you might call a romp; but not a hoyden, observe; no horse-play; oh no, nothing of that sort. And these people fancy that earthquakes, volcanoes, and all such little escapades, will be over, will "cease and determine," as soon as our Earth reaches the age of maidenly bashfulness. Poor thing! It's quite natural, you know, in a healthy growing girl. A little overflow of vivacity, a *pirouette* more or less, an earthquake *plus* or *minus*, what harm should *that* do to any of us! Nobody takes more delight than I in the fawn-like sportiveness of an innocent girl at this period of life; even a shade of *espiéglerie* does not annoy me. But still my own impressions incline me rather to represent the Earth as a fine noble young woman, full of the pride which is so becoming to her sex, and well able to take her own part, in case that, at any solitary point of the heavens, she should come across

one of those vulgar fussy Comets disposed to be rude and take improper liberties.

But others there are, a class whom I perfectly abominate, that place our Earth in the category of decaying, nay, of decayed women. Hair like arctic snows, failure of vital heat, palsy that shakes the head as in the porcelain toys on our mantelpieces, asthma that shakes the whole fabric—these they absolutely fancy themselves to *see*; they absolutely *hear* the tellurian lungs wheezing, panting, crying "Bellows to mend!" periodically as the Earth approaches her aphelion.[1]

Suddenly at this point a demur arises upon the total question. Kant's very problem explodes, as Venetian wine-glasses of old were shivered by any treacherous poison they might contain. For is there, after all, any stationary meaning in the question? Perhaps, in reality, the Earth is both young and old. Young? If she is not young at present, perhaps she *will* be so in future. Old? If she is not old at this moment, perhaps she *has* been old, and has a fair chance of becoming so again. In fact, she is a Phœnix that is known to have secret processes for rebuilding herself out of her own ashes. Little doubt there is but she has seen many a birth-day, many a funeral night, and many a morning of resurrection. For, listen:—Where now the mightiest of oceans rolls in pacific beauty, once were anchored continents and boundless forests. Where the south pole now shuts her frozen gates inhospitably against the intrusions of flesh, once were probably accumulated the ribs of empires; man's imperial forehead, woman's roseate lips, gleamed upon ten thousand hills; and there were innumerable contributions to antarctic journals, almost as good (but not quite) as our own. Even within our domestic limits,—even where little England, in her south-eastern quarter, now devolves so quietly to the sea her sweet pastoral rivulets,—once came roaring down, in pomp of waters, a regal Ganges,[2] that drained some hyper-

[1] Compare Milton's Latin poem "*Naturam non pati Senium.*" —M.

[2] "*Ganges*":—Dr. Nichol calls it by this name for the purpose of expressing its grandeur; and certainly, in breadth, in diffusion at all times, but especially in the rainy season, the Ganges is the supreme

bolical continent, some Quinbus Flestrin of Asiatic proportions,[1] long since gone to the dogs. All things pass away. Generations wax old as does a garment: but eternally God says:—"Come again, ye children of men." Wildernesses of fruit, and worlds of flowers, are annually gathered in solitary South America to ancestral graves: yet still the Fauna of Earth, yet still the Flora of Earth, yet still the Sylva of Earth, does not become superannuated, but blossoms in everlasting youth. Not otherwise, by secular periods, known to us geologically as facts, though obscure as durations, *Tellus* herself, the planet, as a whole, is for ever working by golden balances of change and compensation of ruin and restoration. She recasts her glorious habitations in decomposing them; she lies down for death, which perhaps a thousand times she has suffered; she rises for a new birth, which perhaps for the thousandth time has glorified her disc. Hers is the wedding-garment, hers is the shroud, that eternally is being woven in the loom of *palingenesis*. And God imposes upon her the awful necessity of working for ever at her own grave, yet of listening for ever to his far-off trumpet of resurrection.

If this account of the matter be just, and were it not treasonable to insinuate the possibility of an error against so great a swell as Immanuel Kant, one would be inclined to fancy that Mr. Kant had really been dozing a little on this occasion; or, agreeably to his own illustration elsewhere, that he had realised the pleasant picture of one learned doctor trying to milk a he-goat, whilst another doctor, equally learned, holds the milk-pail below.[2] And there is

river in our British orient. Else, as regards the body of water discharged, the absolute payments made into the sea's exchequer, and the majesty of column riding downwards from the Himalaya, I believe that, since Sir Alexander Burnes's measurements, the Indus ranks foremost by a long chalk.

[1] See Swift's "Gulliver." *Quinbus Flestrin*, we are there told, was the name in the Lilliputian language (meaning "man-mountain") for Gulliver.—M.

[2] Kant applied this illustration to the case where one worshipful scholar proposes some impossible problem (as the squaring of the circle, or the perpetual motion) which another worshipful scholar sits down to solve. The reference was of course to Virgil's line—"Atque idem jungat vulpes, et *mulgeat hircos*."

apparently this two-edged embarrassment pressing upon the case—that, if our dear excellent mother the Earth could be persuaded to tell us her exact age in Julian years, still *that* would leave us all as much in the dark as ever: since, if the answer were "Why, children, at my next birth-day I shall count a matter of some million centuries," we should still be at a loss to *value* her age: would it mean that she was a mere chicken, or that she was "getting up in years"? On the other hand, if (declining to state any odious circumstantialities) she were to reply, "No matter, children, for my precise years, which are disagreeable remembrances; I confess generally to being a lady of a certain age,"—here, in the inverse order, given the *valuation* of the age, we should yet be at a loss for the *absolute* years numerically: would a "certain age" mean that "mamma" was a million, or perhaps not much above seventy thousand?

Every way, you see, reader, there are difficulties. But two things used to strike me as unaccountably overlooked by Kant; who, to say the truth, was profound, yet at no time very agile, in the character of his understanding. First, what age now might we take our brother and sister planets to be? For *this* determination as to a point in *their* constitution will do something to illustrate our own. We are as good as they, I hope, any day; perhaps, in a growl, one might insinuate—*better*. It's not at all likely that there can be any great disproportion of age amongst children of the same household: and therefore, since Kant always countenanced the idea that Jupiter had not quite finished the upholstery of his extensive premises as a comfortable residence for man,—Jupiter having, perhaps, a fine family of mammoths, but in Kant's opinion as yet no family at all of "humans,"—Kant was bound, *ex analogo*, to hold that any little precedency in the trade of living on the part of our own mother Earth could not count for much in the long run. At Newmarket or Doncaster the start is seldom mathematically true: trifling advantages will survive all human trials after abstract equity; and the logic of this case argues that any few thousands of years by which Tellus may have got ahead of Jupiter, such as the having finished her Roman Empire, finished her Crusades, and finished her French

Revolution, virtually amounts to little or nothing; indicates no higher proportion to the total scale upon which she has to run than the few tickings of a watch by which one horse at the start for the Leger is in advance of another. When checked in our chronology by each other, it transpires that, in effect, we are but executing the nice manœuvre of a start; and that the small matter of three or four thousand years, by which we may have advanced our own position beyond some of our planetary rivals, is but the outstretched neck of an uneasy horse at Doncaster. This is *one* of the data overlooked by Kant; and the less excusably overlooked because it was his own peculiar doctrine that uncle Jupiter ought to be considered a greenhorn. Suppose, then, that Jupiter is a younger brother of our mamma; yet, if he is a brother at all, he cannot be so very wide of our own chronology; and therefore the first *datum* overlooked by Kant was—the analogy of our whole planetary system. A second datum, as it always occurred to myself, might reasonably enough be derived from the intellectual vigour of us men. If our mother could, with any show of reason, be considered an old decayed lady, snoring stentoriously in her arm-chair, there would naturally be some *aroma* of phthisis, or apoplexy, beginning to form about *us*, that are her children. But *is* there? If ever Dr. Johnson said a true word, it was in the reply which he made upon this question to the Scottish judge, Burnett, so well known to the world as Lord Monboddo. The judge, a learned man, but obstinate as a mule in certain prejudices, had said, querulously, "Ah, doctor, we are poor creatures, we men of the eighteenth century, by comparison with our forefathers!"—"Oh no, my lord," said Johnson, "we are quite as strong as our ancestors, and a great deal wiser." Yes; our kick is, to the full, as dangerous, and our logic does three times as much execution. This would be a complex topic to treat effectively; and I wish merely to indicate the opening which it offers for a most decisive order of arguments in such a controversy. If the Earth were on her last legs, we her children could not be very strong or healthy. Whereas, in almost every mode of intellectual power, we are a match for the most conceited of elder generations; and in some modes we have energies

exclusively our own. Amongst a thousand indications of strength and budding youth, I will mention two:—Is it likely, is it plausible, that we children of Earth should just begin to find out effective methods by steam of traversing land and sea when the human race had a summons to leave both? Is it not, on the contrary, a clear presumption that the great career of earthly nations is but on the point of opening, when the main obstacles to effectual locomotion, and therefore to extensive human intercourse, are first of all beginning to give way? Secondly, I ask peremptorily, Does it stand with good sense, is it reasonable, that Earth is waning, science drooping, man looking downward, precisely in that epoch when, first of all, man's eye is arming itself for looking effectively into the mighty depths of space? A new era for the human intellect, upon a path that lies amongst its most aspiring, is promised, is inaugurated, by Lord Rosse's almost awful telescope.[1]

What is it, then, that Lord Rosse has accomplished? He has accomplished that which once the condition of the telescope not only refused its permission to hope for, but expressly bade man to despair of. Once, and not very long ago, it was said, Hope for no further improvement of the telescope: and why? Because, concurrently with all increase in the space-penetrating power, there arises an increasing confusion in the images reflected. As the power of this instrument advances in one direction, correspondingly

[1] William Parsons, third Earl of Rosse in the Irish peerage,—born 1800, succeeded to the peerage 1841, died 1867,—had begun his experiments and studies for the improvement of the telescope as early as 1826, and, having concentrated these at last on the problem of the construction of the most perfect possible metallic speculum for the reflecting telescope, succeeded in 1842 in casting such a speculum, of dimensions and a perfection of shape and polish previously unimaginable. The ponderous telescope, twelve tons in weight, into which it was fitted, was erected in his Lordship's park at Parsonstown, King's County, at an expense of £30,000; and, for some time before the appearance of De Quincey's paper in 1846, all the world had been talking of this extraordinary telescope of Lord Rosse, and of the wonderful additions to astronomical knowledge which it had already effected,—the resolution of nebulæ which had defied the utmost powers of previous telescopes, the discovery of many new binary and trinary stars, &c.—M.

it recedes in another. This evil, however, was surmounted by others: and a new career was opened to the telescope with a new range of powers. These powers—how have they been used by Lord Rosse? What is it that he has revealed? Most truly we may say that he has revealed more by far than he found. The theatre to which he has introduced us is *immeasurably* beyond the old one which he found. To say that he found, in the visible universe, a little wooden theatre of Thespis, a *tréteau* or shed of vagrants, and that he presented us, at a price of incalculable anxiety, with a Roman colosseum—*that* is to say little. Columbus, when he introduced the Old World to the New, did in fact only introduce the majority to the minority; but Lord Rosse has introduced the minority to the majority. Augustus Cæsar made it his boast that he had found the city of Rome built of brick and that he left it built of marble: *lateritiam invenit, marmoream reliquit.* Lord Rosse may say, even if to-day he should die, "I found God's universe represented for human convenience, even after all the sublime discoveries of Herschel, upon a globe or spherical chart having a radius of one hundred and fifty feet; and I left it sketched upon a similar chart, keeping exactly the same scale of proportions, but now elongating its radius into one thousand feet."

Great is the mystery of Space, greater is the mystery of Time. Either mystery grows upon man as man himself grows; and either seems to be a function of the godlike which is in man. In reality, the depths and the heights which are in man, the depths by which he searches, the heights by which he aspires, are but projected and made objective externally in the three dimensions of space which are outside of him. He trembles at the abyss into which his bodily eyes look down, or look up; not knowing that abyss to be, not always consciously suspecting it to be, but by an instinct written in his prophetic heart feeling it to be, boding it to be, fearing it to be, and sometimes hoping it to be, the mirror to a mightier abyss that will one day be expanded in himself. Even as to the sense of space, which is the lesser mystery than time, I know not whether the reader has remarked that it is one which swells upon man with the expansion of his mind, and that it is probably

peculiar to the mind of man. An infant of a year old, or oftentimes even older, takes no notice of a sound, however loud, which is a quarter-of-a-mile removed, or even in a distant chamber. And brutes, even of the most enlarged capacities, seem not to have any commerce with distance: distance is probably not revealed to them except indirectly. An animal desire, or a deep animal hostility, may render sensible a distance which else would not be sensible, but not render it sensible *as* a distance. Hence perhaps is explained, and not out of any self-oblivion from higher enthusiasm, a fact that often has occurred, of deer, or hares, or foxes, and the pack of hounds in pursuit, chaser and chased, all going headlong over a precipice together. Depth or height does not readily manifest itself to *them*; so that any *strong* motive is sufficient to overpower the sense of it. Man only has a natural function for expanding, on an illimitable sensorium, the illimitable growths of space. Man, coming to the precipice, reads his danger; the brute perishes: man is saved; but the horse is saved by his rider.

If this sounds in the ear of some a doubtful refinement, the doubt applies only to the lowest degrees of space. For the highest, it is certain that brutes have no perception. To man is as much reserved the prerogative of perceiving space in its higher extensions as of geometrically constructing the relations of space. And the brute is no more capable of apprehending abysses through his eye than he can build upwards or can analyse downwards the aerial synthesis of Geometry. Such, therefore, as is space for the grandeur of man's perceptions, such as is space for the benefit of man's towering mathematic speculations, such—*i.e.* of that nature—is our debt to Lord Rosse, as being the philosopher who has most pushed back the frontiers of our conquests upon this *exclusive* inheritance of man. We have all heard of a king that, sitting on the sea-shore, bade the waves, as they began to lave his feet, upon their allegiance to retire. *That* was said not vainly or presumptuously, but in reproof of sycophantic courtiers. Now, however, we see in good earnest another man, wielding another kind of sceptre, and sitting enthroned upon the shores of infinity, that says to the ice which had frozen up our progress "Melt thou before my

breath!" that says to the rebellious *nebulæ* "Submit, and burst into blazing worlds!" that says to the gates of darkness "Roll back, ye barriers, and no longer hide from us the infinities of God!"

If on some moonless night, in some fitting condition of the atmosphere, Lord Rosse would permit the reader and myself to walk into the front drawing-room of his telescope, then I might say to my companion Come, and I will show you what is sublime! In fact, what I am going to lay before him from Dr. Nichol's work is, or at least *would* be (when translated into Hebrew grandeur by the mighty telescope), a step above even that object which some four-and-thirty years ago in the British Museum struck me as simply the sublimest sight which in this sight-seeing world I had seen. It was the Memnon's head, then recently brought from Egypt. I looked at it, as the reader must suppose in order to understand the depth which I have here ascribed to the impression, not as a human, but as a symbolic head; and what it symbolised to me were:—1. The peace which passeth all understanding. 2. The eternity which baffles and confounds all faculty of computation; the eternity which *had* been, the eternity which *was* to be. 3. The diffusive love, not such as rises and falls upon waves of life and mortality, not such as sinks and swells by undulations of time, but a procession—an emanation from some mystery of endless dawn. You durst not call it a smile that radiated from the lips; the radiation was too awful to clothe itself in adumbrations or memorials of flesh.

In that mode of sublimity, perhaps, I still adhere to my first opinion, that nothing so great was ever beheld. The atmosphere for *this*, for the Memnon, was the breathlessness which belongs to a saintly trance; the holy thing seemed to live by silence. But there *is* a picture, the pendant of the Memnon, there *is* a dreadful cartoon, from the gallery which has begun to open upon Lord Rosse's telescope, where the appropriate atmosphere for investing it must be drawn from another silence, from the frost and from the eternities of death. It is the famous *nebula* in the constellation of Orion: famous for the unexampled defiance with which it resisted all approaches from the most potent of former telescopes;

famous for its frightful magnitude, and for the frightful depth to which it is sunk in the abysses of the heavenly wilderness; famous just now for the submission with which it has begun to render up its secrets to the all-conquering telescope; and famous in all time coming for the horror of the regal phantasma which it has perfected to eyes of flesh.[1] Had Milton's "incestuous mother," with her fleshless son, and with the warrior angel, his father, that led the rebellions of Heaven, been suddenly unmasked by Lord Rosse's instrument, in these dreadful distances before which, simply as expressions of resistance, the mind of man shudders and recoils, there would have been nothing more appalling in the exposure; in fact, it would have been essentially the same exposure: the same expression of power in the detestable phantom, the same rebellion in the attitude, the same pomp of malice in the features towards a universe seasoned for its assault.

Description of the Nebula in Orion,[2] *as forced to show out*

[1] That the reader may the better understand this sentence and the whole of the immediately following passage in the paper—the most De-Quincey-like for weird and fantastic effect which it contains—we have reproduced, as exactly as possible, from Professor Nichol's volume of 1846 the astronomical map which suggested it. This map, there entitled "NEBULA OF ORION FIGURED BY SIR J. HERSCHEL," had fascinated De Quincey inexpressibly; and what appeared to ordinary eyes as a mere vast stretch of far-off physical luminosity, or collocation of patches of luminosity, with dark breaks or gashes in it, had been converted by De Quincey's shaping imagination into a hideous and monstrous personality, an enormous demon of heartlessness and malice, glaring up from his own immeasurable altitude in starry space into still higher regions and purlieus of the universe. The reader, for the next page or two, will find De Quincey's language unintelligible unless he passes at every sentence from the printed words to their optical equivalent in the map. When all is done, he will naturally bethink himself, perhaps with a smile, that the phantasy with which De Quincey has sought to impress him depends for its force on a vanishing assumption. However accurate the map may be, it is but a glimpse of the nebula as operated upon at one selected instant and by one selected potency of the telescope. At another instant, and with a lower or higher telescopic power, the look of the nebulous configuration would be all different,—no demon and no horror! De Quincey has himself anticipated this objection, and answers it in the next footnote.—M.

[2] In reply to various dissenting opinions which have reached me on this subject from different quarters, it has become necessary to say

by Lord Rosse.—You see a head thrown back, and raising its face (or eyes, if eyes it had) in the very anguish of hatred to some unknown heavens. What *should* be its skull wears what *might* be an Assyrian tiara, only ending behind in a floating train. This head rests upon a beautifully developed neck and throat. All power being given to the awful enemy, he is beautiful where he pleases, in order to point and envenom his ghostly ugliness. The mouth, in that stage of the apocalypse which Sir John Herschel was able to arrest in his eighteen-inch mirror, is amply developed. Brutalities unspeakable sit upon the upper lip, which is confluent with a snout; for separate nostrils there are none. Were it not for this one defect of nostrils, and even in spite of this defect

a word or two upon this famous nebula in Orion. All such appearances, whether seen in the fire, or in the clouds, or in the arbitrary combinations of the stars, are read differently by different people. Even where the grouping is exactly the same, being so rigorously limited as to exclude all action of caprice, the result may yet be very different. The expression altogether changes if the key-note is differently interpreted: and this difference will be much greater if any latitude is allowed to the original combination of those starry elements out of which the particular synthesis is obtained. Aware of all this, I cannot complain of those who have not been able to read the same dreadful features in the Orion nebula as I myself have read. But two classes of objectors I am entitled to repel more peremptorily —viz. those who have not taken the trouble to look at Professor Nichol's portrait of this *nebula* in the right position: for it happens that in the professor's book it is placed upside down as regards the natural position of a human head. [In our reproduction of Professor Nichol's portrait of the nebula we have obliged De Quincey by reversing as directed. — M.] Secondly, and still more, I am entitled to complain of others, whose sole objection is that the earliest revelation of this nebular apparition by Lord Rosse's telescope has by the same telescope been greatly modified. What of *that*? Who doubts that it would be modified? It is enough that once, in a single stage of the examination, this apparition put on the figure here represented, and for a momentary purpose here dimly deciphered. Take Wordsworth's fine sonnet upon cloud mimicries, drawn from "all the fuming vanities of earth," either that on the Hamilton Hills in Yorkshire, or that from the plains of France, or that labyrinth of terraces and towers which revealed itself in the very centre of a storm (see the fourth book of the "Excursion")—would it have been any rational objection to these grand pictures that the whole had vanished within the hour? He who fancies *that* does not understand the original purpose in holding up a mirror of description to appearances so grand, and in a dim sense often so symbolic.

(since, in so mysterious a mixture of the angelic and the brutal, we may suppose the sense of odour to work by some compensatory organ), one is reminded by the phantom's attitude of a passage, ever memorable, in Milton: that passage, I mean, where Death first becomes aware, soon after the original trespass, of his own future empire over man. The "meagre shadow" even smiles (for the first time and the last) on apprehending his own abominable bliss, by apprehending from afar the savour "of mortal change on Earth:"—

> "Such a scent" (he says) "I draw
> Of carnage, prey innumerable."

As illustrating the attitude of the phantom in Orion, let the reader allow me to quote the tremendous passage—

> "So saying, with delight he snuffed the smell
> Of mortal change on Earth. As when a flock
> Of ravenous fowl, though many a league remote,
> Against the day of battle, to a field
> Where armies lie encamped come flying, lured
> With scent of living carcases designed
> For death the following day in bloody fight:
> So scented the grim Feature, and upturned
> His nostril wide into the murky air,
> Sagacious of his quarry from so far."[1]

But the lower lip, which is drawn inwards with the curve of a marine shell—oh, what a convolute of cruelty and revenge is *there*! Cruelty!—to whom? Revenge!—for what? Pause not to ask; but look upwards to other mysteries. In the very region of his temples, driving itself downwards into his cruel brain, and breaking the continuity of his diadem, is a horrid chasm, a ravine, a shaft, that many

[1] I have never met with any notice of Milton's obligation to Lucan in this tremendous passage [*Par. Lost*, x. 272-281.—M.],—perhaps the most sublime, all things considered, that exists in human literature. The words in Lucan close thus:—

> "Et nare sagaci
> Aera non sanum tactumque cadavere sensit."

[De Quincey is wrong in thinking that the passage in Lucan had never been pointed out in connexion with the passage in Milton. Newton pointed it out long ago in his edition of Milton; and the reference has been repeated by subsequent commentators.—M.]

centuries would not traverse; and it is serrated on its posterior wall with a harrow that is partly hidden. From the anterior wall of this chasm rise, in vertical directions, two processes: one perpendicular and rigid as a horn, the other streaming forward before some portentous breath. What these could be seemed doubtful; but now, when further examinations by Sir John Herschel at the Cape of Good Hope have filled up the scattered outline with a rich umbrageous growth, one is inclined to regard them as the plumes of a sultan. Dressed he is, therefore, as well as armed. And finally comes Lord Rosse, that glorifies him with the jewellery[1] of stars: he is now a vision "to dream of, not to tell": he is ready for the worship of those that are tormented in sleep: and the stages of his solemn uncovering by astronomy, first by Sir W. Herschel, secondly by his son,[2] and finally by Lord Rosse, is like the reversing of some heavenly doom, like the raising one after another of the seals that had been sealed by the Angel in the Revelation.

Herschel the elder, having greatly improved the telescope, began to observe with special attention a class of remarkable phenomena in the starry world hitherto unstudied — viz. milky spots in various stages of diffusion. The nature of these appearances soon cleared itself up thus far, that generally they were found to be starry worlds, separated from ours by inconceivable distances, and in that way concealing at first their real nature. The whitish gleam was the mask conferred by the enormity of their remotion.

This being so, it might have been supposed that, *as* was

[1] "*The jewellery of stars*":—And one thing is very remarkable, viz. that not only the stars justify this name of jewellery, as usual, by the life of their splendour, but also, in this case, by their arrangement. No jeweller could have set, or disposed with more art, the magnificent quadrille of stars which is placed immediately below the upright plume. There is also another, a truncated quadrille, wanting only the left hand star (or you might call it a bisected lozenge) placed on the diadem, but obliquely placed as regards the curve of that diadem. Two or three other arrangements are striking, though not equally so, both from their regularity and from their repeating each other, as the forms in a kaleidoscope.

[2] Sir William Herschel, born 1738, died 1822; Sir John Herschel, born 1790, died 1871.—M.

the faintness of those cloudy spots or *nebulæ*, such was the distance. But *that* did not follow: for, in the treasury of nature, it turned out that there were other resources for modifying the powers of distance, for muffling and unmuffling the voice of stars. Suppose a world at the distance x; which distance is so great as to make the manifestation of that world weak, milky, nebular. Now, let the secret power that wields these awful orbs push this world back to a double distance! *That* should naturally make it paler and more dilute than ever: and yet, by *compression*, by deeper centralisation, this effect shall be defeated; by forcing into far closer neighbourhood the stars which compose this world, again it shall gleam out brighter when at $2x$ than when at x. At this point of compression, let the great moulding power a second time push it back; and a second time it will grow faint. But, once more let this world be tortured into closer compression, again let the screw be put upon it, and once again it shall shake off the oppression of distance as the dewdrops are shaken from a lion's mane. And thus, in fact, the mysterious architect plays at hide-and-seek with his worlds. "I will hide it," he says, "and it shall be found again by man; I will withdraw it into distances that shall seem fabulous, and again it shall apparel itself in glorious light; a third time I will plunge it into aboriginal darkness, and upon the vision of man a third time it shall rise with a new epiphany."

But, says the objector, there is no such world; there is no world that has thus been driven back and depressed from one deep to a lower deep. Granted: but the same effect, an illustration of the same law, is produced equally whether you take four worlds, all of the same magnitude, and plunge them *simultaneously* into four different abysses sinking by graduated distances one below another, or take one world, and plunge it to the same distances *successively*. So in geology, when men talk of substances in different stages, or of transitional states, they do not mean that they have watched the same individual *stratum* or *phenomenon*, exhibiting states removed from each other by depths of many thousand years; how could they? but they have seen one stage in the case A, another stage in the case B.

This point settled, let it now be remarked that Herschel's resources enabled him to unmask many of these *nebulæ*: stars they were, and stars he forced them to own themselves. Why should any decent world wear an *alias*? There was nothing, you know, to be ashamed of in being an honest cluster of stars. Indeed, they seemed to be sensible of this themselves, and they now yielded to the force of Herschel's arguments so far as to show themselves in the new character of *nebulæ* spangled with stars; these are the *stellar nebulæ*: quite as much as you could expect in so short a time. Rome was not built in a day; and one must have some respect to stellar feelings. It was noticed, however, that where a bright haze, and not a weak milk-and-water haze, had revealed itself to the telescope, this, arising from a case of *compression* (as previously explained), required very little increase of telescopic power to force him into a fuller confession. He made a clean breast of it. But at length came a dreadful anomaly. A "nebula" in the constellation *Andromeda* turned restive; another in *Orion*, I grieve to say it, still more so. I confine myself to the latter. A very low power sufficed to bring him to a slight confession, which in fact amounted to nothing; the very highest would not persuade him to show a star. And Herschel was thus led to infer two classes of *nebulæ*—one that were stars, and another that were *not* stars nor ever were meant to be stars. Yet *that* was premature: he found at last that, though not raised to the peerage of stars, finally they would be so: they were the matter of stars, and by gradual condensation would become suns, whose atmosphere, by a similar process of condensing, would become planets, capable of brilliant literati and of philosophers in several volumes octavo. So stood the case for a long time; it was settled to the satisfaction of Europe that there were two classes of *nebulæ*—one that *were* worlds, one that were *not*, but only the pabulum of future worlds. Some, in fact, were worlds in *esse*, but some only in *posse*. Silence arose. A call was heard for Lord Rosse! and immediately his telescope walked into Orion; destroyed the supposed matter of stars; but, in return, created immeasurable worlds.

As a hint for apprehending the delicacy and difficulty of the process in sidereal astronomy, let the inexperienced

reader figure to himself these separate cases of perplexity ; 1, A perplexity where the dilemma arises from the collision between magnitude and distance :—is the size less, or the distance greater ? 2, Where the dilemma arises between motions, a motion in ourselves doubtfully confounded with a motion in some external body. Or, 3, where it arises between possible positions of an object : is it a real proximity that we see between two stars, or simply an apparent proximity from lying in the same visual line, though in far other depths of space ? As regards the first dilemma, we may suppose two laws, A and B, absolutely in contradiction, laid down at starting : A, that all fixed stars are precisely at the same *distance*,—in this case every difference in the apparent magnitude will indicate a corresponding difference in the real magnitude, and will measure that difference ; B, that all the fixed stars are precisely of the same *magnitude* ; in which case every variety in the size will indicate a corresponding difference in the distance, and will measure that difference. Nor could we imagine any exception to these inferences from A or from B, whichever of the two were assumed, unless through optical laws that might not equally affect objects under different circumstances : I mean, for instance, that might suffer a disturbance as applied under hypoth. B to different depths in space, or under hypoth. A to different arrangements of structure in the star. But, thirdly, it is certain that neither A nor B is the abiding law : and next, it becomes an object, by science and by instruments, to distinguish more readily and more certainly between the cases where the distance has degraded the size and the cases where the size, being *really* less, has caused an exaggeration of the distance ; or, again, where the size, being really less, yet co-operating with a distance really greater, may degrade the estimate (though travelling in a right direction) below the truth ; or again, where the size, being really less, yet counteracted by a distance also less, may equally disturb the truth of human measurements ; and so on.

A second large order of equivocating appearances will arise, not as to magnitude, but as to motion. If it could be a safe assumption that the system to which our planet is

attached were absolutely fixed and motionless, except as regards its own *internal* relations of movement, then every change outside of us, every motion that the registers of astronomy had established, would be objective, and not subjective. It would be safe to pronounce at once that it was a motion in the object contemplated, *not* in the subject contemplating. Or, reversely, if it were safe to assume, as a universal law, that no motion was possible in the starry heavens, then every change of relations in space between ourselves and them would indicate and would measure a progress, or regress, on the part of our solar system, in certain known directions. But now, because it is not safe to rest in either assumption, the range of possibilities for which science has to provide is enlarged; the immediate difficulties are multiplied; but with the result (as in the former case) of reversionally expanding the powers, and consequently the facilities, lodged both in the science and in the arts ministerial to the science. Thus, in the constellation *Cygnus*, there is a star gradually changing its relation to our system, whose distance from ourselves (as Dr. Nichol tells us) is ascertained to be about six hundred and seventy thousand times our own distance from the sun—that is, neglecting minute accuracy, about six hundred and seventy thousand stages of one hundred million miles each. This point being known, it falls within the *arts* of astronomy to translate this apparent angular motion into miles; and, presuming this change of relation to be not in the star, but really in ourselves, we may deduce the velocity of our course, we may enter into our *log* daily the rate at which our whole solar system is running. Bessel,[1] it seems, the eminent astronomer who died lately, computed this velocity to be such (viz. three times that of our own earth in its proper orbit) as would carry us to the star in forty-one thousand years. But, in the meantime, the astronomer is to hold in reserve some small share of his attention, some trifle of a side-glance, now and then, to the possibility of an error, after all, in the main assumption: he must watch the indications, if any such should arise, that not ourselves, but the star in *Cygnus*, is the

[1] Frederick William Bessel, born 1784, died 1846.—M.

real party concerned, in drifting at this shocking rate, with no prospect of coming to an anchorage.[1]

Another class, and a frequent one, of equivocal phenomena—phenomena that are reconcilable indifferently with either of two assumptions, though less plausibly reconciled with the one than with the other—concerns the position of stars that seem connected with each other by systematic relations, and which yet *may* lie in very different depths of space, being brought into seeming connexion only by the human eye. There have been, and there are, cases where two stars dissemble an interconnexion which they really *have*, and other cases where they simulate an interconnexion which they have *not*. All these cases of simulation and dissimulation torment the astronomer by multiplying his perplexities, and deepening the difficulty of escaping them. He cannot get at the truth: in many cases, magnitude and distance are in collusion with each other to deceive him; motion subjective is in collusion with motion objective; duplex systems are in collusion with fraudulent stars, having no real partnership whatever, but mimicking such a partnership by means of the limitations or errors affecting the human eye, where it can apply no other sense to aid or to correct itself. So that the business of astronomy, in these days, is no sinecure, as the reader perceives. And, by another evidence, it is continually becoming less of a sinecure.

[1] It is worth adding at this point, whilst the reader remembers without effort the numbers, viz. forty-one thousand years for the time (the space being our own distance from the sun repeated six hundred and seventy thousand times), what would be the time required for reaching, in the *body*, that distance to which Lord Rosse's six-feet mirror has so recently extended our *vision*. The time would be, as Dr. Nichol computes, about two hundred and fifty millions of years, supposing that our rate of travelling was about three times that of our earth in its orbit. Now, as the velocity is assumed to be the same in both cases, the ratio between the distance (already so tremendous) of Bessel's 61 *Cygni* and that of Lord Rosse's farthest frontier is as forty-one thousand to two hundred and fifty millions. This is a simple rule-of-three problem for a child. And the answer to it will, perhaps, convey the simplest expression of the superhuman power lodged in the new telescope: as is the ratio of forty-one thousand to two hundred and fifty millions, so is the ratio of our own distance from the sun multiplied by six hundred and seventy thousand to the outermost limit of Lord Rosse's sidereal vision.

Formerly, one or two men—Tycho, suppose, or, in a later age, Cassini, Horrox, and Bradley [1]—had observatories ; one man, suppose, observed the stars for all Christendom ; and the rest of Europe observed *him*. But now, up and down Europe, from the deep blue of Italian skies [2] to the cold frosty atmospheres of St. Petersburg and Glasgow, the stars are conscious of being watched everywhere ; and, if all astronomers do not publish their observations, all use them in their speculations. New and brilliantly-appointed observatories are rising in every latitude, or risen ; and none, by the way, of these new-born observatories is more interesting, from the circumstance of its position, or more *picturesque* to a higher organ than the eye—viz. to the human heart—than the New Observatory raised by the University of Glasgow.

The New Observatory of Glasgow is now, I believe, finished [3] ; and the only fact connected with its history that was painful, as embodying and recording that Vandal alienation from science, literature, and all their interests, which has ever marked our too haughty and Caliph-Omar-like British Government, lay in the circumstance that the glasses of the apparatus, the whole mounting of the establishment, in so far as it was a scientific establishment, and even the workmen for putting up the machinery, were imported from Bavaria. We, that once bade the world stand aside when the question arose about glasses, or the graduation of instruments, were now literally obliged to stand cap in hand, bowing to Mr. Somebody, successor of Frauenhofer [4] or Frauendevil, in Munich ! Who caused *that*, we should all be glad to know, if not the wicked Treasury, that killed the hen that laid the golden

[1] Tycho Brahe, 1546-1601 ; John Dominic Cassini, 1625-1712 ; Jeremiah Horrox, 1619-1641 ; James Bradley, 1690-1762.—M.

[2] "*Deep blue of Italian skies*" :—Which deep blue, however, is denied by some people, who contend that, though often introduced into the pictures of the great Italian masters, since the realities of nature must be continually modified by the learned artist for purposes of effect, in reality the skies of Italy are as often of a pale French grey as those of more northern lands.

[3] De Quincey knew the observatory well, having resided in it for a while as a guest of his friend Professor Nichol.—M.

[4] Joseph Frauenhofer, Bavarian optician, born 1787, died 1826. —M.

eggs by taxing her until her spine broke? It is to be hoped that, at this moment, and specifically for this offence, some scores of Exchequer men, chancellors, and other rubbish, are in purgatory, and perhaps working, with shirt-sleeves tucked up, in purgatorial glass-houses, with very small allowances of beer to defray the cost of perspiration. But why trouble a festal remembrance with commemorations of crimes or criminals? What makes the Glasgow Observatory so peculiarly interesting is its position, connected with and overlooking so vast a city, having as many thousands of inhabitants as there are days in a year (I so state the population in order to assist the reader's memory [1]), and nearly all children of toil; and a city, too, which, from the necessities of its circumstances, draws so deeply upon that fountain of misery and guilt which some ordinance, as ancient as "our father Jacob," with his patriarchal well for Samaria, has bequeathed preferentially to manufacturing towns—to Ninevehs, to Babylons, to Tyres. How tarnished with eternal canopies of smoke, and of sorrow, how dark with agitations of many orders, is the mighty town below! How serene, how quiet, how lifted above the confusion, and the roar, and the strifes of earth, is the solemn observatory that crowns the heights overhead! And duly, at night, just when the toil of overwrought Glasgow is mercifully relaxing, then comes the summons to the labouring astronomer. Everywhere the astronomer speaks not of the night, but of the day and the flaunting daylight, as the hours "in which no man can work." And the least reflecting of men must be impressed by the idea that at wide intervals, but intervals scattered over Europe, whilst "all that mighty heart" is, by sleep, resting from its labours, secret eyes are lifted up to heaven in astronomical watch-towers,—eyes that keep watch and ward over spaces that make us dizzy to remember, that register the promises of comets, and disentangle the labyrinths of worlds.

Another feature of interest, connected with the Glasgow Observatory, is personal, and founded on the intellectual characteristics of the present professor. As a popularising astronomer, he has done more for the benefit of his great

[1] Instead of a population of 365,000, as in 1846, Glasgow has now a population of, I should suppose, between 800,000 and 900,000.—M.

science than all the rest of Europe combined; and now, when he notices, without murmur, the fact that his office of popular teacher is almost taken out of his hands (so many are they who have trained of late for the duty), that change has, in fact, been accomplished through knowledge, through explanations, through suggestions, dispersed and prompted by himself.

For my own part, as one belonging to the laity, and not to the *clerus*, in the science of astronomy, I could scarcely have presumed to report minutely, or to sit in the character of dissector upon, the separate details of Dr. Nichol's works, —either this, or those which have preceded it. But in this view it is sufficient to have made the general acknowledgment which already *has* been made, that Dr. Nichol's works, and his oral lectures upon astronomy, are to be considered as the *fundus* of the *popular* knowledge on that science now working in this generation. More important it is, and more in reconciliation with the tenor of my own ordinary studies, to notice the philosophic spirit in which Dr. Nichol's works are framed, and the lofty character of that enthusiasm which sustains his intellectual advances. In reading astronomical works there arises (from old experience of what is usually most faulty) a wish either for the naked severities of science, with a total abstinence from *all* display of enthusiasm, or else, if the cravings of human sensibility *are* to be met and gratified, that it shall be by an enthusiasm unaffected and grand as its subject. Of that kind is the enthusiasm of Dr. Nichol.

There was a man in the last century, and an eminent man too, who used to say that, whereas people in general pretended to admire astronomy as being essentially sublime, he for *his* part looked upon all that sort of thing as a swindle; and, on the contrary, he regarded the solar system as decidedly vulgar; because the planets were so infernally punctual, they kept time with such horrible precision, that they forced him, whether he would or no, to think of post-office clocks, mail-coaches, and book-keepers. Regularity may be beautiful, but it excludes the sublime. What he wished for was something like Lloyd's list :—

Comets—due 3 ; arrived 1.
Mercury, when last seen, appeared to be distressed ; but made no signals.
Pallas and *Vesta*, not heard of for some time ; supposed to have foundered.
Moon, spoken last night through a heavy bank of clouds ; out sixteen days : all right.

Now this poor man's misfortune was to have lived in the days of mere planetary astronomy. At present, when our own little system, with all its grandeurs, has dwindled by comparison to a subordinate province, if any man is bold enough to say so,—a poor shivering unit amongst myriads that are brighter,—we ought no longer to talk of astronomy, but of *the astronomies*. There are, 1, the planetary, 2, the cometary, 3, the sidereal ; perhaps also others, as, for instance, even yet, 4, the nebular,—because, though Lord Rosse has smitten it with a rod like the son of Amram's, has made it open, and has cloven a path through it, yet other and more fearful *nebulæ* may loom in sight (if further improvements should be effected in the telescope), that may puzzle even Lord Rosse. That would be vexatious. But no matter. What's a *nebula*, what's a world, more or less ? In the spiritual heavens are many mansions : in the starry heavens, that are now unfolding and preparing to unfold before us, are many vacant areas upon which the astronomer may pitch his secret pavilion. He may dedicate himself to the service of the *Double Suns* ; he has my licence to devote his whole time to the quadruple system of suns in *Lyra*. Swammerdam [1] spent his life in a ditch, watching frogs and tadpoles ; why may not an astronomer give nine lives, if he had them, to the watching of that awful appearance in *Hercules* which pretends to some rights over our own system ? Why may he not mount guard, with public approbation, for the next fifty years, upon the zodiacal light, the interplanetary ether, and other rarities, which the professional body of astronomers would naturally keep (if they could) for their own private enjoyment ? There is no want of variety now, nor in fact of irregularity ; so that our friend of the last century who complained of the solar system as too monotonous would not need to do so any

[1] John Swammerdam, Dutch naturalist, born 1637, died 1680.—M.

longer. There are anomalies enough to keep him cheerful. And, for all purposes of frightening us, anomalies in systems so vast are as good as a ghost.

But of all the novelties that excite my own interest in the expanding astronomy of recent times, the most promising are those charming little pyrotechnic planetoids[1] that variegate our annual course. It always struck me as disgusting that, in going round the sun, we must be passing continually over old roads, and yet have no means of establishing an acquaintance with them: they might as well be new for every trip. Those chambers of ether, through which we are tearing along night and day (for *our* train stops at no stations), doubtless, if we could put some mark upon them, must be old fellows perfectly liable to recognition. And yet, for want of such a mark, though all our lives flying past them and through them, we can never challenge them as old acquaintances. The same thing happens in the desert: one monotonous iteration of sand, sand, sand, unless where some miserable fountain stagnates, forbids all approach to familiarity: nothing is circumstantiated or differenced: travel it for three generations, and you are no nearer to identification of its parts; so that it amounts to travelling through an abstract idea. There is no Aristotelian *αναγνωρισις*, no recognition. For the desert, I suspect the thing is hopeless; but, as regards our planetary orbit, matters are mending: for the last six or seven years, these showers of falling stars, recurrent at known intervals, make those parts of the road *kenspeckle* (to use an old Scottish word)—*i.e.* liable to recognition, and distinguishable from the rest.[2] For years I have

[1] "*Pyrotechnic planetoids*":—The reader will understand me as alluding to the periodic shooting stars. It is now well known that, as upon our own poor little earthly ocean we fall in with certain phenomena as we approach certain latitudes, so also upon the great ocean navigated by our Earth we fall in with prodigious showers of these meteors, at periods no longer uncertain, but fixed as jail-deliveries. "These remarkable showers of meteors," says Dr. Nichol, "observed at different periods in August and November, seem to demonstrate the fact that, at these periods, we have come in contact with two streams of such planetoids then intersecting the earth's orbit." If they intermit, it is only because they are shifting their nodes, or points of intersection.

[2] Somewhere I have seen it remarked that, if on a public road you

heard of them as celebrating two annual jubilees—one in August, one in November. You are a little too late,[1] reader, for seeing this year's summer's festival; but that's no reason why you should not engage a good seat for the November meeting; which, if I recollect, is about the 9th, or the Lord Mayor's day, and, on the whole, better worth seeing. For anything *we* know, this may be a great day in the earth's earlier history; she may have put forth her original rose on this day, or tried her hand at a primitive specimen of wheat; or she may, in fact, have survived some gunpowder plot about this time; so that the meteoric appearance may be a kind of congratulating *feu-de-joie* on the anniversary of the happy event. What it is that the "cosmogony man" in the "Vicar of Wakefield" would have thought of such novelties, whether he would have favoured us with his usual opinion upon such topics—viz. that *anarchon ara kai ateleutaion to pan*—or have sported a new one exclusively for this occasion, may be doubtful. What it is that astronomers think, who are a kind of "cosmogony men," the reader may learn from Dr. Nichol, Note B, pp. 139, 140.

In taking leave of a book and a subject so well fitted to draw out the highest mode of that grandeur which *can* con-

meet a party of four women, it is at least fifty to one that they are all laughing; whereas, if you meet an equal party of my own unhappy sex, you may wager safely that they are talking gravely, and that one of them is uttering the word *money*. Hence it must be—viz. because our sisters are too much occupied with the playful things of this earth, and our brothers with its gravities—that neither party sufficiently watches the skies. And *that* accounts for a fact which often has struck myself—viz. that, in cities, on bright moonless nights, when some brilliant skirmishings of the Aurora are exhibiting, or even a luminous arch, which is a broad riband of snowy light that spans the skies, positively, unless I myself say to people "Eyes upwards!" not one in a hundred, male or female, but fails to see the show, though it may be seen *gratis*, simply because their eyes are too uniformly reading the earth. This downward direction of the eyes, however, must have been worse in former ages: because else it never *could* have happened that until Queen Anne's days nobody ever hinted in a book that there *was* such a thing, or *could* be such a thing, as the Aurora Borealis; and, in fact, Halley[2] had the credit of discovering it.

[1] "*Too late*":—Originally this paper was published not far from midsummer.

[2] Edmund Halley, 1656-1742.—M.

nect itself with the external, I would wish to contribute my own brief word of homage to this grandeur by recalling from a fading remembrance of twenty-five years back a short *bravura* of John Paul Richter, but in my own English version. I call it a *bravura*, as being intentionally a passage of display and elaborate execution; and in one sense I may call it partly "my own,"—since, at twenty-five years' distance (after one single reading) it would not have been possible for any man to report a passage of this length without *greatly* disturbing[1] the texture of the composition. By altering, though unintentionally, by adding, by subtracting, or by transposing, unavoidably one makes it partly one's own; but it is right to mention that the sublime turn at the end belongs entirely to John Paul.[2]

Dream-vision of the Infinite as it reveals itself in the Chambers of Space.

"God called up from dreams a man into the vestibule of heaven, saying 'Come thou hither, and see the glory of my house.' And to the servants that stood around his throne he said 'Take him, and undress him from his robes of flesh: cleanse his vision, and put a new breath into his nostrils: arm him with sail-broad wings for flight. Only touch not with any change his human heart—the heart that weeps and trembles.' It was done; and, with a mighty angel for his guide, the man stood ready for his infinite voyage; and from the terraces of heaven, without sound or farewell, at once they wheeled away into endless space. Sometimes with the solemn flight of angel wing they fled through Zaarrahs of darkness, through wildernesses of death that

[1] "*Disturbing*":—Neither perhaps should I much have sought to avoid alterations if the original had been lying before me: for it takes the shape of a dream; and this most brilliant of all German writers wanted in that field the severe simplicity, that horror of the *too much*, belonging to Grecian architecture, which is essential to the perfection of a dream considered as a work of art. Too elaborate he was, and too artificial, to realise the grandeur of the shadow.

[2] What follows seems to be a reduced version of a translation from Richter which De Quincey had contributed to the *London Magazine* for March 1824 under the title of "Dream upon the Universe."—M.

divided the worlds of life: sometimes they swept over frontiers that were quickening under prophetic motions towards a life not yet realised. Then, from a distance that is counted only in heaven, light dawned for a time through a sleepy film: by unutterable pace the light swept to *them*, they by unutterable pace to the light: in a moment the rushing of planets was upon them: in a moment the blazing of suns was around them. Then came eternities of twilight, that revealed, but were not revealed. To the right hand and to the left towered mighty constellations, that by self-repetitions and by answers from afar, that by counter-positions, that by mysterious combinations, built up triumphal gates, whose architraves, whose archways—horizontal, upright—rested, rose—at altitudes, by spans, that seemed ghostly from infinitude. Without measure were the architraves, past number were the archways, beyond memory the gates. Within were stairs that scaled the eternities above, that descended to the eternities below: above was below, below was above, to the man stripped of gravitating body: depth was swallowed up in height insurmountable, height was swallowed up in depth unfathomable. Suddenly as thus they rode from infinite to infinite, suddenly as thus they tilted over abysmal worlds, a mighty cry arose—that systems more mysterious, worlds more billowy, other heights and other depths, were dawning, were nearing, were at hand. Then the man sighed, stopped, shuddered, and wept. His overladen heart uttered itself in tears; and he said 'Angel, I will go no further. For the spirit of man aches under this infinity. Insufferable is the glory of God's house. Let me lie down in the grave, that I may find rest from the persecutions of the Infinite; for end, I see, there is none.' And from all the listening stars that shone around issued one choral chant—'Even so it is: Angel, thou knowest that it is: end there is none that ever yet we heard of.' 'End is there none?' the Angel solemnly demanded. 'And is this the sorrow that kills you?' But no voice answered, that he might answer himself. Then the Angel threw up his glorious hands to the heaven of heavens, saying, 'End is there none to the Universe of God? Lo! also THERE IS NO BEGINNING.'"

POSTSCRIPT[1]

On the True Relations of the Bible to merely Human Science

On throwing his eyes hastily over the preceding paper, the writer becomes afraid that some readers may give such an interpretation to a few playful expressions upon the age of our earth, &c., as to class him with those who use geology, cosmology, &c., for purposes of attack or insinuation against the Mosaic cosmogony, or generally against the silent scriptural compliances with the Jewish ignorance in matters of science. Upon this point, therefore, he wishes to make a firm explanation of his own opinions, which (whether right or wrong) will liberate him, once for all, from any such jealousy: and, at the same time, he takes the liberty, temperately but boldly, of challenging a special attention to this postscript, under the belief that, upon a question continually rising in importance, and provoking more and more of acrimonious controversy (viz. the true relations of the Bible to merely human science), this postscript offers two arguments which are at once novel and conclusive as regards the main point at issue.

It is sometimes said that a religious messenger from God does not come amongst men for the sake of teaching truths in science, or of correcting errors in science. Most justly is

[1] This "Postscript" was an addition in 1854 to the original *Tait* article of 1846. In the American Collective Edition of De Quincey it is printed as a separate and independent article; but it appears here in its proper place and connexion.—M.

this said: but often in terms far too feeble. For generally these terms are such as to imply that, although no direct and imperative function of his mission, it was yet open to him as a permissible function—that, although not pressing with the force of an obligation upon the missionary, it was yet at his discretion—if not to correct other men's errors, yet at least in his own person to speak with scientific precision. I contend that it was *not*. I contend that to have uttered the truths of astronomy, of geology, &c., at the era of new-born Christianity, was not only *below* and *beside* the purposes of a religion, but would have been *against* them. Even upon errors of a far more important class than errors in science can ever be—superstitions, for instance, that degraded the very idea of God; prejudices and false usages, that laid waste human happiness (such as slavery, and many hundreds of other abuses that might be mentioned)—the rule evidently acted upon by the Founder of Christianity was this: Given the purification of the well-head, once assumed that the fountains of truth are cleansed, all these derivative currents of evil will cleanse themselves. As a general rule, the branches of error were disregarded, and the roots only attacked. If, then, so lofty a station was taken with regard even to such errors as really *had* moral and spiritual relations, how much more with regard to the comparative trifles (as in the ultimate relations of human nature they are) of merely human science! But, for my part, I go further, and assert that upon three reasons it was impossible for any messenger from God (or offering himself in that character) to have descended into the communication of truth merely scientific, or economic, or worldly. And the three reasons are these:—First, because such a descent would have degraded his mission, by lowering it to the base level of a collusion with human curiosity, or (in the most favourable case) of a collusion with petty and transitory interests. Secondly, because it would have ruined his mission, by disturbing its free agency, and misdirecting its energies, in two separate modes: first, by destroying the spiritual *auctoritas* (the prestige and consideration) of the missionary; secondly, by vitiating the spiritual atmosphere of his audience—that is, corrupting and misdirecting the character

of their thoughts and expectations. He that in the early days of Christianity should have proclaimed the true theory of the solar system, or that by any chance word or allusion should then, in a condition of man so little prepared to receive such truths, have asserted or assumed the daily motion of the earth on its own axis, or its annual motion round the sun, would have found himself entangled at once and irretrievably in the following unmanageable consequences :—First of all, and instantaneously, he would have been roused to the alarming fact that, by this dreadful indiscretion, he himself, the professed deliverer of a new and spiritual religion, had in a moment untuned the spirituality of his audience. He would find that he had awakened within them the passion of curiosity—the most unspiritual of passions—and of curiosity in a fierce polemic shape. The very safest step in so deplorable a situation would be instantly to recant. Already by this one may estimate the evil, when such would be its readiest palliation. For in what condition would the reputation of the teacher be left for discretion and wisdom as an intellectual guide when his first act must be to recant—and to recant what to the whole body of his hearers would wear the character of a lunatic proposition ? Such considerations might possibly induce him *not* to recant. But in that case the consequences are far worse. Having once allowed himself to sanction what his hearers regard as the most monstrous of paradoxes, he has no liberty of retreat open to him. He must stand to the promises of his own acts. Uttering the first truth of a science, he is pledged to the second ; taking the main step, he is committed to all which follow. He is thrown at once upon the endless controversies which science in every stage provokes, and in none more than in the earliest. Starting, besides, from the authority of a divine mission, he could not (as others might) have the privilege of selecting arbitrarily or partially. If upon one science, then upon all ; if upon science, then upon art ; if upon art and science, then upon *every* branch of social economy his reformation and advances are equally due—due as to all, if due as to any. To move in one direction is constructively to undertake for all. Without power to retreat, he has thus thrown the intel-

lectual interests of his followers into a channel utterly alien to the purposes of a spiritual mission.

The spiritual mission, therefore, the purposes for which only the religious teacher was sent, has now perished altogether—overlaid and confounded by the merely scientific wranglings to which his own inconsiderate precipitance has opened the door. But suppose at this point that the teacher, aware at length of the mischief which he has caused, and seeing that the fatal error of uttering one solitary novel truth upon a matter of mere science is by inevitable consequence to throw him upon a road leading altogether away from the proper field of his mission, takes the laudable course of confessing his error, and of attempting a return into his proper spiritual province. This may be his best course ; yet, after all, it will not retrieve his lost ground. He returns with a character confessedly damaged. His very excuse rests upon the blindness and shortsightedness which forbade his anticipating the true and natural consequences. Neither will his own account of the case be generally accepted. He will not be supposed to retreat from further controversy as inconsistent with spiritual purposes, but because he finds himself unequal to the dispute. And, in the very best case, he is, by his own acknowledgment, tainted with human infirmity. He has been ruined for a servant of inspiration ; and how ? By a process, let it be remembered, of which all the steps are inevitable under the same agency : that is, in the case of any primitive Christian teacher having attempted to speak the language of scientific truth in dealing with the phenomena of astronomy, geology, or of any merely human knowledge.

Now, thirdly and lastly, in order to try the question in an extreme form, let it be supposed that, aided by powers of working miracles, some early apostle of Christianity should actually have succeeded in carrying through the Copernican system of astronomy as an article of blind belief sixteen centuries before the progress of man's intellect had qualified him for naturally developing that system. What, in such a case, would be the true estimate and valuation of the achievement ? Simply this, that he had thus succeeded in cancelling and counteracting a determinate scheme of divine

discipline and training for man. Wherefore did God give to man the powers for contending with scientific difficulties? Wherefore did he lay a secret train of continual occasions, that should rise, by relays, through scores of generations, for provoking and developing those activities in man's intellect, if, after all, he is to send a messenger of his own, more than human, to intercept and strangle all these great purposes? This is to mistake the very meaning and purposes of a revelation. A revelation is not made for the purpose of showing to indolent men that which, by faculties already given to them, they may show to themselves; no: but for the purpose of showing *that* which the moral darkness of man will not, without supernatural light, allow him to perceive. With disdain, therefore, must every thoughtful person regard the notion that God could wilfully interfere with his own plans by accrediting ambassadors to reveal astronomy, or any other science which he has commanded men, by qualifying men, to reveal for themselves.

Even as regards astronomy—a science so nearly allying itself to religion by the loftiness and by the purity of its contemplations — Scripture is nowhere the *parent* of any doctrine, nor so much as the silent sanctioner of any doctrine. It is made impossible for Scripture to teach falsely by the simple fact that Scripture, on such subjects, will not condescend to teach at all. The Bible adopts the erroneous language of men (which at any rate it must do in order to make itself understood), not by way of sanctioning a theory, but by way of using a fact. The Bible, for instance, *uses* (postulates) the phenomena of day and night, of summer and winter; and, in relation to their causes, speaks by the same popular and inaccurate language which is current for ordinary purposes even amongst the most scientific of astronomers. For the man of science, equally with the populace, talks of the sun as rising and setting, as having finished half his day's journey, &c., and, without pedantry, could not in many cases talk otherwise. But the results, which are all that concern Scripture, are equally true, whether accounted for by one hypothesis which is philosophically just, or by another which is popular and erring.

Now, on the other hand, in geology and cosmology the

case is stronger. *Here* there is no opening for a compliance even with a *language* that is erroneous ; for no language at all is current upon subjects that have never engaged the popular attention. *Here*, where there is no such stream of apparent phenomena running counter (as in astronomy there is) to the real phenomena, neither is there any popular language opposed to the scientific. The whole are abstruse speculations, even as regards their objects, nor dreamed of as possibilities, either in their true aspects or their false aspects, till modern times. The Scriptures, therefore, nowhere allude to such sciences, either as taking the shape of histories applied to processes current and in movement, or as taking the shape of theories applied to processes past and accomplished. The Mosaic cosmogony, indeed, gives the succession of natural births ; and probably the general outline of such a succession will be more and more confirmed as geology advances. But as to the time, the duration, of this successive evolution, it is the idlest of notions that the Scriptures either have, or could have, condescended to human curiosity upon so awful a prologue to the drama of this world. Genesis would no more have indulged so mean a passion with respect to the mysterious inauguration of the world than the Apocalypse with respect to its mysterious close. "Yet the six *days* of Moses!" Days! But is it possible that human folly should go the length of understanding by the Mosaical *day*, the mysterious *day* of that awful agency which moulded the heavens and the heavenly host, no more than the ordinary *nychthemeron* or cycle of twenty-four hours? The period implied in a *day*, when used in relation to the inaugural manifestation of creative power in that vast drama which introduces God to man in the character of a demiurgus, or creator of the world, indicated one stage amongst six, involving probably many millions of years. The silliest of nurses in her nursery babble could hardly suppose that the mighty process began on a Monday morning and ended on Saturday night. If we are seriously to study the value and scriptural acceptation of scriptural words and phrases, I presume that our first business will be to collate the use of these words in one part of Scripture with their use in other parts holding the same spiritual relations. The

creation, for instance, does not belong to the earthly or merely historical records, but to the spiritual records of the Bible; to the same category, therefore, as the prophetic sections of the Bible. Now, in those, and in the Psalms, how do we understand the word *day*? Is any man so little versed in biblical language as not to know that (except in the merely historical parts of the Jewish records) every section of time has a secret and separate acceptation in the Scriptures? Does an *æon*, though a Grecian word, bear scripturally (either in Daniel or in St. John) any sense known to Grecian ears? Do the seventy *weeks* of the prophet mean weeks in the sense of human calendars? Already the Psalms (xc.), already St. Peter (2d Epist.), warn us of a peculiar sense attached to the word *day* in divine ears. And who of the innumerable interpreters understands the twelve hundred and sixty days in Daniel, or his two thousand and odd days, to mean, by possibility, periods of twenty-four hours? Surely the theme of Moses was as mystical, and as much entitled to the benefit of mystical language, as that of the prophets.

The sum of this matter is this:—God, by a Hebrew prophet, is sublimely described as *the Revealer*; and, in variation of his own expression, the same prophet describes him as the Being "that knoweth the darkness." Under no idea can the relations of God to man be more grandly expressed. But of what is he the revealer? Not surely of those things which he has enabled man to reveal for himself, but of those things which, were it not through special light from heaven, must eternally remain sealed up in inaccessible darkness. On this principle we should all laugh at a revealed cookery. But essentially the same ridicule, not more, and not less, applies to a revealed astronomy, or a revealed geology. As a fact, there *is* no such astronomy or geology: as a possibility, by the *a priori* argument which I have used (viz. that a revelation on such fields would counteract *other* machineries of providence), there *can* be no such astronomy or geology in the Bible. Consequently there *is* none. Consequently there can be no schism or feud upon *these* subjects between the Bible and the philosophies outside.

PLATO'S REPUBLIC[1]

THERE is no reader who has not heard of Solon's apologetic distinction between the actual system of laws framed by himself for the Athenian people, under his personal knowledge of the Athenian temper, and that better system which he *would* have framed in a case where either the docility of the national character had been greater or the temptations to insubordination had been less. Something of the same distinction must be taken, on behalf of Plato, between the ideal form of Civil Polity which he contemplated in the ten books of his *Republic* and the practical form which he contemplated in the thirteen books of his *Legislative System*.[2] In the former work he supposes himself to be instituting an independent state on such principles as were philosophically just; in the latter, upon the assumption that what might be the best as an abstraction was not always the best as adapted to a perverse human nature, nor, under ordinary circumstances, the most likely to be durable, he professes to make a compromise between his sense of duty as a philosopher and his sense of expedience as a man of the world. Like Solon, he quits the normal for the attainable; and from the ideal man, flexible to all the purposes of a haughty philosophy, he descends in his subsequent speculations to the refractory

[1] Appeared originally in *Blackwood* for July 1841; reprinted by De Quincey in 1858 as one of the papers forming Vol. IX of the Collective Edition of his writings.—M.

[2] "*Thirteen books*":—There are twelve books of the *Laws*; but the closing book, entitled the *Epinomis*, or *Supplement to the Laws*, adds a thirteenth. I have thought it convenient to designate the entire work by the collective name of the *Legislative System*.

Athenian, such as he really was in the generation of Pericles. And this fact gives a great value to the more abstract work; since no inferences against Greek sentiment or Greek principles could have been drawn from a work applying itself to Grecian habits as Plato found them, or none which it would not be easy to evade. "This," it would have been said, "is not what Plato approved, but what Plato conceived to be the best compromise with the difficulties of the case under the given civilisation." Now, on the contrary, we have Plato's view of absolute optimism, the true *maximum perfectionis* for social man, in a condition openly assumed to be modelled after a philosopher's ideal. There is no work, therefore, from which profounder draughts can be derived of human frailty and degradation, under its highest intellectual expansion, previously to the rise of Christianity. Just one century subsequent to the birth of Plato, which, by the most plausible chronology, very little preceded the death of Pericles, the great Macedonian expedition under Alexander was proceeding against Persia. By that time the bloom of Greek civility had a little faded. The war itself, taken in connexion with the bloody feuds that succeeded it amongst the great captains of Alexander, gave a shock to the civilisation of Greece; so that, upon the whole, it would not be possible to fix on any epoch more exemplifying Greek intellect, or Greek refinement, than precisely that youth of Plato which united itself by immediate consecutive succession to the most brilliant section in the administration of Pericles. It was, in fact, throughout the course of the Peloponnesian War—the one sole war that divided the whole household of Greece against itself, giving motive to efforts, and dignity to personal competitions—contemporary with Xenophon and the younger Cyrus, during the manhood of Alcibiades, and the declining years of Socrates—amongst such coevals and such circumstances of war and revolutionary truce—that Plato passed his fervent youth. The bright sunset of Pericles still burned in the Athenian heavens; the gorgeous tragedy and the luxuriant comedy, so recently created, were now in full possession of the Athenian stage; the city was yet fresh from the hands of its creators—Pericles and Phidias; the fine arts were towering into their meridian altitude; and, about the period

when Plato might be considered an adult *sui juris*,—that is, just four hundred and ten years before the birth of Christ,—the Grecian intellect might be said to culminate in Athens. Any more favourable era for estimating the Greek character cannot, we presume, be suggested. For, although personally there might be a brighter constellation gathered about Pericles, at a date twenty-five years antecedent to this era of Plato's maturity, still, as regarded the results upon the collective populace of Athens, *that* must have become most conspicuous and palpable in the generation immediately succeeding. The thoughtfulness impressed by the new theatre, the patriotic fervour generated by the administration of Pericles, must have revealed themselves most effectually after both causes had been operating through one entire generation. And Plato, who might have been kissed as an infant by Pericles, but never could have looked at that great man with an eye of intelligent admiration—to whose ear the name of Pericles must have sounded with the same echo from the past as that of Pitt to the young men of our British Reform Bill—could yet better appreciate the elevation which he had impressed upon the Athenian character than those who, as direct coevals of Pericles, could not gain a sufficient offing or "elongation" from his beams to appreciate his lustre. My inference is that Plato, more even than Pericles, saw the consummation of the Athenian intellect, and witnessed more than Pericles himself the civilisation wrought by Pericles.

This consideration gives a value to every sentiment expressed by Plato. The Greek mind was then more intensely Greek than at any subsequent period. After the period of Alexander it fell under exotic influences—alien and Asiatic, regal and despotic. One hundred and fifty years more brought the country (*i.e.* Macedon as well as Greece) under the Roman yoke; after which the true Grecian intellect never again spoke a natural or genial language. The originality of the Athenian mind had exhaled under the sense of constraint. But as yet, and throughout the life of Plato, Greece was essentially Grecian, and Athens radically Athenian.

With respect to those particular works of Plato which concern the constitution of governments, there is this special

reason for building upon *them* any inferences as to the culture of Athenian society—that probably these are the most direct emanations from the Platonic intellect, the most purely representative of Plato individually, and the most prolonged or sustained effort of his peculiar mind. It is customary to talk of a Platonic philosophy as a coherent whole that may be gathered by concentration from his disjointed dialogues. My belief is that no such systematic whole exists. Fragmentary views are all that remain in his works. The four minds from whom we have received the nearest approximation to an orbicular system, or total body of philosophy, are those of Aristotle, of Des Cartes, of Leibnitz, and, lastly, of Immanuel Kant. All these men have manifested an ambition to complete the cycle of their philosophic speculations; but, for all that, not one of them has come near to his object. How much less can any such cycle or systematic whole be ascribed to Plato! His dialogues are a succession of insulated essays upon problems just then engaging the attention of thoughtful men in Greece. But we know not how much of these speculations may really belong to those interlocutors into whose mouths so large a proportion is thrown; nor have we any means of discriminating between such doctrines as were put forward by way of tentative explorations, or trials of dialectic adroitness, and, on the other hand, such as Plato adopted in sincerity of heart, whether originated by his master or by himself. There is, besides, a very awkward argument for suspending our faith in any one doctrine as rigorously Platonic. We are assured beforehand that the intolerance of the Athenian people in the affair of Socrates must have damped the speculating spirit in all philosophers who were not prepared to fly from Athens. It is no time to be prating as a philosophical free-thinker when bigotry takes the shape of judicial persecution. That one cup of poison administered to Socrates must have quenched the bold spirit of philosophy for centuries. This is a reasonable presumption. But the same argument takes another and a more self-confessing form in another feature of Plato's writings; viz. in his affectation of a double doctrine: esoteric, the private and confidential form authorized by his final ratification; and exoteric, which was but another name for impostures

with which he duped those who might else have been calumniators. But what a world of falsehoods is wrapped up in this pretence! First of all, what unreflecting levity to talk of this twofold doctrine as at all open to the human mind on questions taken generally! How many problems of a philosophic nature can be mentioned in which it would be at all possible to maintain this double current, flowing collaterally, of truth absolute and truth plausible? No such double view would be often available under any possible sacrifice of truth. Secondly, if it were, how thoroughly would that be to adopt and renew those theatrical pretences of the itinerant *Sophistæ*, or encyclopædic hawkers of knowledge, whom elsewhere and so repeatedly Plato, in the assumed person of Socrates, had contemptuously exposed. Thirdly, in a philosophy by no means remarkable for its opulence in ideas, which moves at all only by its cumbrous superfluity of words (partly in disguise of which, under the forms of conversation, we believe the mode of dialogue to have been first adopted), how was this double expenditure to be maintained? What tenfold contempt it impresses upon a man's poverty where he himself forces it into public exposure by insisting on keeping up a double establishment, in the town and in the country, at the very moment that his utmost means are below the decent maintenance of one very humble household! Or let the reader represent to himself the miserable *charlatanerie* of a gasconading secretary affecting to place himself upon a level with Cæsar by dictating to three amanuenses at once, when the slender result makes it painfully evident that to have kept one moving in any respectable manner would have bankrupted his resources. But, lastly, when this affectation is maintained of a double doctrine, by what test is the future student to distinguish the one from the other? Never was there an instance in which vanity was more short-sighted. It would not be possible by any art or invention more effectually to extinguish our interest in a scheme of philosophy—by summarily extinguishing all hope of ever separating the true from the false, the authentic from the spurious—than by sending down to posterity this claim to a secret meaning lurking behind a mask. If the key to the distinction between true and false

is sent down with the philosophy, then what purpose of concealment is attained? Who is it that is duped? On the other hand, if it is *not* sent down, what purpose of truth is attained? Who is it, then, that is *not* duped? And, if Plato relied upon a confidential successor as the oral expounder of his secret meaning, how blind must *he* have been to the course of human contingencies who should not see that this tradition of explanation could not flow onwards through four successive generations without inevitably suffering some fatal interruption; after which, once let the chain be dropped, the links would never be recoverable,—as, in effect, we now see to be the result. No man can venture to say, amidst many blank contradictions and startling inconsistencies, *which* it is that represents the genuine opinion of Plato, *which* the ostensible opinion for evading a momentary objection, or for opposition, or perhaps simply for prolonging the conversation. And, upon the whole, this one explosion of vanity, of hunger-bitten penury affecting the riotous superfluity of wealth, has done more to check the interest in Plato's opinions than all his mysticism and all his vagueness of purpose. In other philosophers, even in him who professedly adopted the rule of "σκοτισον," "*darken your meaning*," there is some chance of arriving at the real doctrine, because, though hidden, it has unity of idea. But, with a man who avows a purpose of double-dealing, to understand is, after all, the smallest part of your task. Having perhaps with difficulty framed a coherent construction for the passage, having with much pains entitled yourself to say,—"Now I comprehend,"—next comes the question, *What is it* you comprehend? Why, perhaps a doctrine which the author secretly abjured; in which he was misleading the world; in which he put forward a false opinion for the benefit of his own consistency, and for the sake of securing safety to those in which he revealed what he supposed to be the truth.

There is, however, in the following political hypothesis of Plato, less real danger from this conflict of two meanings than in those cases where he treated a great pre-existing problem of speculation. Here, from the practical nature of the problem, and its more *ad libitum* choice of topics, he was not forced upon those questions which, in a more formal theorem, he

could not uniformly evade. But one difficulty will always remain for the perplexity of the student—viz. in what point it was that Socrates had found it dangerous to tamper with the religion of Greece, if Plato could safely publish the free-thinking objections which are here avowed. In other respects, the *Ideal Republic* of Plato will surprise those who have connected with the very name of Plato a sort of starry elevation, and a visionary dedication to what is pure. Of purity, in any relation, there will be found no traces: of visionariness, in the sense of ideas undefined, more than enough.

BOOK THE FIRST

The *First* book of the Polity, or general form of Commonwealths, is occupied with a natural, but very immethodical, discussion of justice. Justice — as one of those original problems, unattainable in solitary life, which drove men into social union, for the sake of winning by their collective forces that which else was inaccessible to individual efforts—should naturally occupy the preliminary place in a speculation upon the possible varieties of government. Accordingly, some later authors, like Mr. Godwin in his *Political Justice*, have transmuted the whole question as to forms of social organisation into a transcendent question of Justice, and how it can be fairly distributed in reconcilement with the necessities of a practical administration or the general prejudices of men. A state (a commonwealth, for example) is not simply a head or supremacy in relation to the other members of a political union; it is also itself a body amongst other coequal bodies, one republic amongst other co-ordinate republics. War may happen to arise; taxation; and many other burdens. How are these to be distributed so as not to wound the fundamental principle of justice? They may be apportioned unequally. That would be injustice, without a question. There may be scruples of conscience upon war, or upon contributions to war. That would be a more questionable case; but it would demand a consideration, and must be brought into harmony with the general theory of justice. For the supreme problem in such a speculation seems to be this: how

to draw the greatest amount of strength from civil union; how to carry the powers of man to the greatest height of improvement, or to place him in the way of such improvement; and, lastly, to do all this in reconciliation with the least possible infringement or suspension of man's individual rights. Under any view, therefore, of a commonwealth, nobody will object to the investigation of justice, as a proper basis for the whole edifice. But the student is dissatisfied with this Platonic introduction:—1st, as being too casual and occasional, consequently as not prefiguring in its course the order of those speculations which are to follow; 2dly, as too verbal and hair-splitting; 3dly, that it does not connect itself with what follows. It stands inertly and uselessly before the main disquisition as a sort of vestibule, but we are not made to see any transition from one to the other.

Meantime, the outline of this nominal introduction is what follows:—Socrates has received an invitation to a dinner-party (δειπνον) from the son of Cephalus, a respectable citizen of Athens. This citizen, whose sons are grown up, is naturally himself advanced in years, and is led, therefore, reasonably, to speak of old age. This he does in the tone of Cicero's Cato; contending that, upon the whole, it is made burdensome only by men's vices. But the value of his testimony is somewhat lowered by the fact that he is moderately wealthy, and, secondly (which is more important), that he is constitutionally moderate in his desires. Towards the close of his remarks, he says something on the use of riches in protecting us from injurious treatment, whether of our own towards others, or of others towards us.

This calls up Socrates, who takes occasion to put a general question as to the nature and definition of injustice. Cephalus declines the further prosecution of the dialogue for himself, but devolves it on his son. Some of the usual Attic word-sparring follows; of which this may be taken as a specimen:—A definition having been given of justice in a tentative way by Socrates himself, as though it might be that quality which restores to every one what we know to be his own, and the eldest son having adopted this definition as true, Socrates then objects the cases in which, having borrowed a man's sword, we should be required deliberately to replace it in the

hands of the owner, knowing him to be mad. An angry interruption takes place from one of the company called Thrasymachus. This is appeased by the obliging behaviour of Socrates. But it produces this effect upon what follows,—that, in fact, from one illustration adduced by this Thrasymachus the whole subsequent discussion arises. He, amongst other arts which he alleges in evidence of his views, cites that of government; and, by a confusion between mere municipal law and the moral law of universal obligation, he contends that in every land that is just which promotes the interest or wishes of the governing power—be it king, nobles, or people as a body. Socrates opposes him by illustrations, such as Xenophon's *Memorabilia* have made familiar to all the world, drawn from the arts of cooks, shepherds, pilots, &c.; and the book closes with a general defence of justice as requisite to the very existence of political states, since without some trust reposed in each other wars would be endless. It is also presumable that man, if generally unjust, would be less prosperous, as enjoying less of favour from the gods, and, finally, that the mind in a temper of injustice may be regarded as diseased,—that it is less qualified for discharging its natural functions, and that thus, whether looking at bodies politic or individuals, the sum of happiness would be greatly diminished if injustice were allowed to prevail.

BOOK THE SECOND

In the beginning of this Book, two brothers, Glauco and Adeimantus, undertake the defence of injustice, but upon such arguments as have not even a colourable plausibility. They suppose the case that a man were possessed of the ring which conferred the privilege of invisibility,—a fiction so multiplied in modern fairy tales, but which in the barren legends of the Pagan world was confined to the ring of Gyges. Armed with this advantage, they contend that every man would be unjust. But this is change only as to fact. Next, however, they suppose a change still more monstrous; viz. that moral distinctions should be so far confounded as that a man practising all injustice should pass for a man exquisitely just, and that a corresponding transfer of reputation should

take place with regard to the just man. Under such circumstances, they contend that every man would hasten to be unjust, and that the unjust would reap all the honours together with all the advantages of life. From all which they infer two things: first, that injustice is not valued for anything in its own nature or essence, but for its consequences; and, secondly, that it is a combination of the weak many against the few who happen to be strong which has invested justice with so much splendour by means of written laws. It seems strange that even for a momentary effect in conversation such trivial sophistry as this could avail. Because, if in order to represent justice and injustice as masquerading amongst men, and losing their customary effects, or losing their corresponding impressions upon men's feelings, it is necessary first of all to suppose the whole realities of life confounded, and fantastic impossibilities established, no result at all from such premises could be worthy of attention; and, after all, the particular result supposed does not militate in any respect against the received notions as to moral distinctions. Injustice might certainly pass for justice; and, as a second case, injustice, having a bribe attached to it, might blind the moral sense to its true proportions of evil. But that will not prove that injustice can ever fascinate *as* injustice (for in the case supposed it prospers as bribery), or, again, that it will ever prosper as regards its effects in that undisguised manifestation. If, to win upon men's esteem, it must privately wear the mask of justice, or if, to win upon men's practice, it must previously connect itself with artificial bounties of honour and preferment—all this is but another way of pronouncing an eulogy on justice. It is agreeable, however, to find that these barren speculations are soon made to lead into questions more directly pertinent to the constitution of bodies politic. Socrates observes that large models are best fitted to exhibit the course of any action or process; and therefore he shifts the field of illustration from the individual man, armed or not with the ring of Gyges, to regular commonwealths; in which it is, and in their relations to other commonwealths or to their own internal parts, that he proposes to answer these wild sophisms on the subject of justice as a moral obligation.

Socrates lays the original foundation of all political states in want or reciprocal necessity. And of human necessity the very primal shape is that which regards our livelihood. Here it is interesting to notice what is the *minimum* which Plato assumes for the "outfit" (according to our parliamentary term) of social life. We moderns, for the mounting a colony or other social establishment, are obliged generally to assume five heads of expenditure: viz. 1, food; 2, shelter, or housing; 3, clothing; 4, warmth (or fuel); 5, light. But the two last we owe to our colder climate, and (which is a consequence of that) to our far more unequal distribution of daylight. As the ancients knew nothing of our very short days, so, on the other hand, they knew nothing, it is true, of our very long ones; and at first sight it might seem as if the one balanced the other. But it is not so; sunrise and sunset were far more nearly for the ancients than they ever can be for nations in higher latitudes coincident with the periods of retiring to rest and rising; and thus it was that they obtained another advantage—that of evading much call for fuel. Neither artificial light, nor artificial heat, was much needed in ancient times. Hot climates, often more than cold ones, require (it is true) artificial heat after sunset. But the ancient Greeks and Romans, therefore *a fortiori* nations less refined, were in bed by sunset during the periods of their early simplicity,—that is, during the periods of their poverty. The total expense in fuel amongst the Greeks was upon a scale suited to ages in which fossil coal was an unknown staff of life; it was no more than met the simple demands of cookery, and of severe winters; these, it is true, even in Spain, nay, in Syria, are sometimes accompanied with heavy storms of snow.[1] But, on the other hand, the winters, if severe at times, are brief; and, even so far north in Italy as Milan, the season of genial spring, and of luxuriant flowers, often commences in February. In contrast with our five requisitions of northern latitudes,—which, as implying a higher (because a more provident) scale of existence, have a philosophic value,—it is interesting to find Plato, under the person of Socrates, requiring only three:

[1] "*Storms of snow*":—For an instance of a very critical fall of snow near Jerusalem, not long before our Saviour's time, see Josephus.

viz. food, clothes, and lodging. The arts, therefore, which he presumes requisite for establishing a state are four: one occupied with the culture of the ground; one with the building of habitations; and two ministerial to the adorning, or at least to the protecting, of the person. The ploughman before all others for our food; in the second rank, the mason for raising dwelling-houses; and, in the last place, the weaver, combined with the shoemaker, for the manufacturing our dress: these four artists, says Plato, are the very *minimum* establishment on which a city or a colony can begin to move. But a very few steps will bring us, he remarks, to a call for further arts; in particular, it will soon be found that it is a sad waste of time for any of the four already mentioned to be interrupted by the necessity of making their several tools and implements. A fifth artist will therefore be found necessary, in the character of tool-maker, in common with all the rest. A sixth and a seventh will soon be called for, in the character of shepherds and herdsmen; for, if sheep and oxen are not indispensable as food, they are so as furnishing the leather required by the shoemaker. And, lastly, merchants, for the purpose of exporting the surplus products, and of importing such as are defective, together with resident retailers of all articles in household use, are contemplated as completing the establishment. The gradual accession of luxuries in every class is next presumed as what would follow in general, but would not be allowed in Plato's republic; and, as the increase of population will require additional territory (though it is an oversight not to have assigned from the first the quantity of soil occupied and the circumstances of position in regard to neighbours), this will make an opening for war; and that again for a regular class of men dedicated to the arts of attack and defence. It is singular that Plato should thus arbitrarily lay his ground of war in aggressive principles; because, if he assumed his territory spacious enough, and the expansion of population as slow as it really was in Greece, the case in which he finally plants his necessity for war might not occur until the new state should be rich enough to find, in the difficulty supposed, a case for throwing off colonies, rather than for unprovoked attacks on neighbouring states. It is remarkable, however,

that Plato, a pagan writer, makes war a subsequent and ministerial phenomenon in civil societies; whereas Hobbes, nominally a Christian, makes the belligerent condition to be that transcendent and original condition of man out of which society itself arose.

War, however, has begun; and soldiers, as a mercenary class, are henceforwards required. Upon which Plato unfolds his ideas as to the proper qualifications of a soldier. Of course he insists upon courage, athletic powers of body in general (qualifications so pre-eminently required before the invention of firearms[1]), and especially upon the power of speed and agility. But it is singular that, in describing the temperament likely to argue courage, he insists upon irascibility; whereas, with far more truth of philosophy, his pupil Aristotle, in after years, speaks contemptuously of all courage founded upon anger, as generally spurious in its nature, and liable to the same suspicion as that which is founded upon intoxication.

It is upon this occasion, and in connexion with the education of the state soldiery, as a professional class needing to be trained expressly for a life of adventurous service and of hardship, that Plato introduces his celebrated doctrine imputing mischievous falsehood to the poets. The mythology of paganism, it is needless to say, represented the gods under characters the most hideous and disgusting. But the main circumstances in these representations, according to Plato, are mere fictions of Hesiod and of Homer. Strange, indeed, that Plato should ascribe to any poets whatever so prodigious a power as that of having created a national religion, for the religion of paganism was not something independent of the mythology. It was wholly involved in the mythology. Take away the mythologic legends, and you take away all the objects of worship. The characteristics by which Latona is distinguished from Ceres, Apollo from Mercury, Diana

[1] "*Firearms*":—It is very true that the essential principle distinguishing firearms, viz. their application to *distant* warfare, making men independent of personal strength, was found in slingers and archers. But these arms of the martial service were always in some disrepute throughout Greece. Even Hercules (in the *Herc. Furens*) is described by Euripides as subject to ridicule and reproach from Lycus, his enemy, on account of his having resorted to archery.

from Minerva, Hebe from Aurora, all vanish, and leave mere nonentities, if the traditional circumstances of their theogony and history are laid aside as fabulous. Besides, if this could be surmounted, and if Plato could account for all the tribes of Hellas having adopted what he supposes to be the reveries of two solitary poets, how could he account for the general agreement in these traditions of other distant nations, who never heard so much as the names of the two Greek poets, nor could have read them if they had? The whole speculation is, like too many in Plato, without a shadow of coherency, and at every angle presenting some fresh incongruity. The fact really was that the human intellect had been for some time outgrowing its foul religions: clamorously it began to demand some change; but how little it was able to effect that change for itself is evident from no example more than that of Plato; for he, whilst dismissing as fables some of the grosser monstrosities which the pagan Pantheon offered, loaded in effect that deity whom he made a concurrent party to his own schemes for man with vile qualities quite as degrading as any which he removed, and in effect so much the worse as regarded the result, because, wanting the childish monstrosities of the mythologic legends, they had no benefit from any allegoric interpretations in the background. Thus cruelty and sensuality, if they happen to fall in with this pagan philosopher's notions of state utility, instantly assume a place in his theories; and thence is transferred upon the deities, who are supposed to sanction this system, a far deeper taint of moral pollution than that which, being connected with extravagant *mythi*, might provoke an enlightened mind to reject it with incredulity, or to accept it as purely symbolic. Meantime, it is remarkable that Plato should connect this reform in education specially with his soldiers; and still more so when we understand his reason. It was apparently on two grounds that he fancied the pagan superstitions injurious to a class of men whom it was important to keep clear of panics. First, on an argument derived from the Hades of the poets, Plato believed the modes of punishment exhibited by these poets to be too alarming, and likely to check by intimidation that career of violence which apparently he thinks requisite in a soldier.

Surely he might have spared his anxiety ; for, if in any quarter of its barren superstitions paganism betrayed its impoverished fancy, it was in its pictures of Tartarus ; where, besides that the forms of punishment are, 1*st*, so scanty, and applied only to monstrous offences, 2*d*, so ludicrous, they are, 3*d*, all of them ineffectual for terror, were it only by the general impression conveyed that they are allegoric, and meant to be allegoric. Secondly, Plato seems to have had in his thoughts those panic terrors which sometimes arose from the belief that superior beings suddenly revealed themselves in strange shapes. Both in Roman and Grecian experience, these fancied revelations, like the Christian revelation of St. Iago to the Spanish host, had produced unexpected victories, but also unexpected flights. He argues, accordingly, against the possibility of a god adopting any metamorphosis ; but upon the weak dialectic argument, weaker than a cobweb to any superstitious heart, that a celestial being would not leave a better state for a worse. How visionary to suppose that any mind previously inclined to shadowy terrors, and under the operation of solitude, of awful silence, and of wild grotesque scenery in forests or mountains, would be charmed into sudden courage by an *a priori* little conundrum of the logic school ! O philosopher, placed by the side of a simple-hearted honest rustic, what a fool dost thou appear ! And, after all, if such evils arose from familiarity with the poets, and on that account the soldiery was to be secluded from all such reading, how were they to be saved from the contagion of general conversation with their fellow-citizens ? Or, again, on foreign expeditions, how were they to be sequestered from such traditions as were generally current, and were everywhere made the subject of festal recitations or prelections, or of national music ?

In the midst of these impracticable solicitudes for the welfare of his soldiers, Plato does not overlook the probability that men trained to violence may mutiny, and (being consciously the sole depositaries of the public weapons and skill, as well as originally selected for superior promise of strength) may happen to combine, and to turn their arms against their fellow-citizens. It is painful to see so grave

a danger dismissed so carelessly—*tantamne rem tam negligenter?* The sole provision which Plato makes against the formidable danger is by moral precepts impressing on the soldier kindness and affability to those whom it was his professional mission to protect. But such mere sanctions of decorum or usage—how weak must they be found to protect any institution merely human against a strong interest moving in an adverse direction! The institutions of Romulus, in a simple and credulous age, had the consecration (if imaginary, yet, beyond a doubt, universally believed) of heaven itself; a real sanctity guarded the institutions of Rome, which yet rocked and quaked for centuries under the conflicting interests of the citizens. But a philosopher's republic, in an age of philosophy and free-thinking, must repose upon human securities. Show any order of men a strong change setting in upon the current of their civil interests, and they will soon be led to see a corresponding change in their duties;—not to mention that the sense of duty must be weak at all times amongst men whom Plato supposes expressly trained to acts of violence, whom he seeks to wean from the compunctious scruples of religion, and whose very service and profession had its first origin in acknowledged rapacity. Thus, by express institution of Plato, and by his own forecasting, had the soldiery arisen. Thus had the storm been called up; and it would be too late to bid it wheel this way or that, after its power had been consciously developed, and the principles which should control this power were found to be nothing more than the ancient intentions of a theoretic founder, or the particular interests of a favoured class. Besides, it will be seen further on that the soldiers are placed under peculiar disadvantages. They are to possess nothing; and thus, in addition to the strong temptation of conscious power, they are furnished with a second temptation in their painful poverty, contrasted with the comparative wealth of the cowardly citizens whom they protect, and, finally, with a third temptation (which also furnished an excuse), in the feeling that they are an injured class.

BOOK THE THIRD

Plato is neither methodic nor systematic ; he has neither that sort of order which respects the connexion of what he teaches as a thing to be understood, nor that which respects its connexion as a thing which is to be realized—neither that which concerns the *ratio cognoscendi* (to adopt a great distinction revived by Leibnitz from the schoolmen) nor that, on the other hand, which regards the *ratio essendi*. This last neglect he could not have designed ; the other perhaps he did. And the very form of dialogue or conversations was probably adopted to intimate as much. Be that as it may, we look in vain for any such distribution of the subject as should justify the modern division into separate books. The loose order of colloquial discussion, sometimes going back, sometimes leaping forward with impatient anticipation, and then again anxiously resuming a topic insufficiently examined : such is the law of succession by which the general theme is slowly advanced, and its particular heads are casually unfolded.

Accordingly, in this third book, the subject of the soldiery is resumed ; and the proper education for that main column of the state, on which its very existence is openly founded, engages the more circumstantial attention of Plato. The leading object kept in view, as regards the mental discipline, is to brace the mind against fear. And here, again, Plato comes back upon the poets, whom he taxes with arts of emasculation, in reference to the hardy courage which his system demands. He distributes the poets into the two great classes of narrative and dramatic : those who speak directly in their own person, like Homer[1] ; and those who utter their sentiments as ventriloquists, throwing their voice first upon this character of a drama, next upon that. It is difficult to see what purpose Plato had in this distribution ; but it is highly interesting to us of this day, because we

[1] But how like Homer? Homer, and most other classical narrative poets, move indifferently (and perhaps equally) by interchange of speeches, sometimes colloquial and gossiping, sometimes stately and haranguing. Plato forgets his Homer.

might otherwise have supposed that, upon a point of delicacy, Plato had forborne to involve in his censure of the poets that body of great dramatists, so recently drawn into existence, and of whom two at least (Euripides and Aristophanes) were in part of their lives contemporary with himself. He does, however, expressly notice them ; and, what is more to the purpose, he applies to them his heaviest censure, though on what principle is somewhat obscure. The nominal reason for his anger is that they proceed by means of imitation ; and that even mimetically to represent woman has the effect of transfusing effeminacy, by some unexplained process, into the manners of the imitator. Now really this at the best would be too fantastic. But, when we reflect on the great tragic poets of Greece, and consider that in the midst of pagan darkness the only rays of moral light are to be found in THEM, and that Milton, almost a bigot, as being a Puritan, yet, with that exalted standard of scriptural truth which he carried for ever in his mind, refers to these poets, and the great theatre which they founded, for the next best thing to Christian teaching—we feel our hearts alienated from Plato. But, when we also contrast with this Greek scenical morality, and its occasional elevation, the brutal, sensual, and cruel principles which we constantly find in Plato himself (more frequently, indeed, and more outrageously, than in any other pagan author of eminence), it cannot be thought unreasonable that our alienation should amount to disgust. Euripides was truly a great man, struggling for a higher light than he could find. Plato was a thorough Greek, satisfied, so far as ethics were concerned, with the light which existed, nor dreaming of anything higher. And, with respect to the Greek religion, Euripides forestalled by twenty years all that Plato has said ; we have his words to this day, and they are much more impressive than Plato's ; and probably [1] these very words of Euripides

[1] "*Probably*" :—more than probably, I fear. Plato, it may be suspected, cultivated the arts of petty larceny to an extent that was far from philosophic. I said nothing, but winked at his dishonesty, when some pages back he thought proper to charge upon Homer and Hesiod the monstrous forgery of Jupiter Optimus Maximus and all Olympus, nothing less (if the reader will believe me) than the whole Pantheon. But in fact that charge was fraudulently appropriated by Plato from

first suggested to Plato the doctrine which he so maliciously directs in this place against the very poets as a body who, through one of their number, first gave currency to such a bold speculation, and first tried, as *enfans perdus* (or the leaders of a forlorn hope), whether the timid superstition of the Athenians, and the fanaticism founded on their fear, would tolerate such innovations.

After this second sentence of exile against the poets—which we cannot but secretly trace to the jealousy of Plato, armed against that section of the Athenian *literati* most in the public favour—we are carried forward to the music of the Greeks. The soldiery are excluded from all acquaintance with any but the austerer modes. But, as this is a subject still mysterious even to those who come armed with the knowledge of music as a science, and as no more than a general caution is given, this topic is not one of those which we are called on to discuss.

So slight was the Grecian circuit of education, and especially where mathematics happened to be excluded, that poetry and music apparently bound the practical encyclopædia of Plato. From the mind, therefore, he passes to the physical education. And here we find two leading cautions, of which one, at least, is built on more accurate observation of medical truths than we should have expected in the age of Plato. The first will, perhaps, not much strike the reader, for it expresses only the stern injunction upon every soldier of that temperance as to strong liquors which in our days has descended (with what permanence we fear to ask) amongst the very lowest and most suffering of human beings. It is, however, creditable to Plato that he should have perceived the mischievous operation of inebriation upon the health and strength; for in his age the evil of such a practice was chiefly thrown upon its moral effects,—the indecorums which it caused, the quarrels, the murderous contests, the lasting alienations, and the perilous breaches of confidence. There was little general sense of any evil in wine as a relaxer of the bodily system; as, on the other hand, neither then nor

a better man, viz. Herodotus, who must have been fifty years older than the philosopher. And now at this point again we find the philosopher filching from Euripides!

in our days is there any just appreciation of the subsidiary benefits which sometimes arise from strong liquors, or at least the clamorous call for such liquors in cold climates, where the diet is cold and watery. Edmund Burke, as we remember, in his enlarged wisdom, did not overlook this case; we individually have seen too large a series of cases to doubt the fact that in vast cities, wherever the diet of poor families happens to be thrown too much upon mere watery broths, it is a pure instinct of nature, and often a very salutary instinct, which forces them into a compensatory stimulus of alcohol. The same natural instinct for strong liquor as a partial relief is said to be prompted by scrofula. In a Grecian climate, and with a limited population, this anomalous use of wine was not requisite; and for the soldiery, enjoying a select diet, it could least of all be needful. Plato shows his discretion, therefore, as well as the accuracy of his observation, in forbidding it. For he notices one effect which invariably follows from the addiction to strong liquors, even where as yet they have not mastered the constitutional vigour; viz. their tendency to produce a morbid sensibility to cold. We ourselves have seen a large party of stout men travelling on a morning of intense severity. Amongst the whole number, eight or nine, there were two only who did not occasionally shiver, or express some unpleasant feeling connected with the cold; and these two, one being W. Wordsworth, were the sole water-drinkers of the party. The other caution of Plato shows even more accuracy of attention; and it is completely verified by modern experience. He is naturally anxious that the diet of the soldiery should be simple and wholesome. Now, it was almost certain that those who reflected on the final object he had in view would at once interpret his meaning as pointing to the diet of professional athletes. These men for Greece were the forerunners of the Roman gladiators, as the Greek hippodrome bisected itself into the Roman circus and amphitheatre. And, as Plato's object was to secure the means of unusual strength, what more natural than to consult the experience of those who, having long had the very same end, must by this time have accumulated a large science of the appropriate means? Now, on closer examina-

tion, Plato perceived that the end was *not* the same. The gladiatorial schools had before them some day, well known and immutable, of public festivities and games, against which they were to prepare their maximum of bodily power. By the modern and by the ancient system of training, it is notorious that this preparatory discipline can be calculated to a nicety. When the "fancy" was in favour amongst ourselves, the pugilist, after entering into any legal engagement, under strong penalties, to fight on a day assigned, went into training about six weeks previously; and by the appointed time he had, through diet, exercise, sleep, all nicely adjusted to the rules of this discipline, brought up his muscular strength and his wind to the summit of what his constitution allowed. Now, certainly, in a general view, the purpose of the Platonic soldier was the same, but with this important difference—that his fighting condition was needed not on one or two days consecutively, but on many days, and not against a day punctually assignable, but against a season or period perhaps of months, quite indeterminate as to its beginning, end, or duration. This one difference made the whole difference; for both ancient and modern training concur in these two remarkable facts—1st, That a condition of physical power thus preternaturally produced cannot be maintained, but that uniformly a rapid relapse follows, down to a condition of debility. Like the stone of Sisyphus, the more painfully and with unnatural effort a resisting object has been rolled up to a high summit, with so much the more thundering violence does it run back. The state was too intense not to be succeeded by sudden recoil. 2dly, It has been found that these spasms of preternatural tension are not without danger: apoplexies, ruptures of large blood-vessels, and other modes of sudden death, are apt to follow from the perilous tampering with the exquisite machinery of nature. This also had been the experience of Greece. Time, as a great element in all powerful changes, must be allowed in order to secure their safety. Plato, therefore, lays down as a great law for the physical discipline that in no part of its elements, whether diet, exercise, abstinence, or gymnastic feats of strength and address, shall the ritual for the soldiers borrow anything from the schools of the *athletæ*.

In the remaining part of this Book we have some organic arrangements proposed. First, as to the local situation—a strong military position is requisite for the soldiery, and ground must therefore be selected originally which offers this advantage. The position is to be such as may at once resist a foreign enemy and *command the other orders in the state.* Upon this ground a body of lodgings is to be built; and in these lodgings a single regard is prescribed to the purpose in view. Direct utility and convenience, without ostentation, are to preside in the distribution of the parts and in the architectural style; the buildings are, in fact, to unite at once the uses of a barrack and a fortress.

Next, as this fortress, distinct from the other parts of the city, when connected with arms, and the use of arms, and regular discipline, and select qualities of body, cannot but throw vast power into the hands of the soldiery, so that from being guardians of the city (as by direct title they are) they might easily become its oppressors and pillagers, universally the soldiers are to be incapable by law of holding any property whatever. Without regard to quality, without regard to tenure, they can inherit nothing; they can possess nothing; neither gold nor silver, metals which must not even find an entrance into their dwellings under any pretence of custody; nor land; nor any other article; nor, finally, must they exercise a trade.

Thirdly, the administration of affairs, the executive power, and the supreme rank, are vested in the persons of the highest military officers—those who rise to that station by seniority and by extraordinary merit. This is very vaguely developed; but enough exists to show that the form of polity would be a martial aristocracy, a qualified "*stratocracy.*" In this state, it is not so much true that an opening or a temptation is exposed to a martial tyranny as that, in fact, such a tyranny is planted and rooted from the first, with all the organs of administration at its disposal.

Lastly, in what way is the succession to be regulated through the several ranks and functions of the state? Not exactly, or under positive settlement, by *castes,* or an Egyptian succession of a son to his father's trade, &c. This is

denounced in the sense of an unconditional or unbending system; for it is admitted that fathers of talent may have incompetent sons, and stupid fathers may have sons of brilliant promise. But, on the whole, it seems to be assumed that, amongst the highest, or martial order, the care dedicated to the selection of the parents will insure children of similar excellence,

"Fortes creantur fortibus et bonis,"

and that amongst the artisans one average level of mediocrity will usually prevail; in which case the advantage of personal training to the art, under a domestic tutor who never leaves him, must give such a bias to the children of the citizens for their several pursuits as will justify the principle of hereditary succession. Still, in any case where this expectation fails, a door is constantly kept open for meeting any unusual indication of nature by corresponding changes in the destiny of the young people. Nature, therefore, in the last resort, will regulate the succession, since the law interposes no further than in confirmation of that order in the succession which it is presumed that nature will have settled by clear expressions of fitness. But, in whatever case nature indicates determinately some different predisposition in the individual, then the law gives way; for, says Plato, with emphasis, "The paramount object in my commonwealth is that every human creature should find his proper level, and every man settle into that place for which his natural qualities have fitted him"

BOOK THE FOURTH

These last words are not a mere flourish of rhetoric. It is, according to Plato's view, the very distinguishing feature in his polity that each man occupies his own natural place. Accordingly, it is the business of this Book to favour that view by a sort of fanciful analogy between what we in modern times call the four cardinal virtues and the four capital varieties of state polity, and also between these virtues and the constituent orders in a community. This, however, may be looked upon as no step in advance towards

the development of his own Republic, but rather as a halt for the purpose of looking back upon what has been already developed.

The cardinal virtues, as we see them adopted nearly four hundred years after Plato by Cicero, are prudence, fortitude, temperance, and justice. The first will find its illustration, according to Plato, in the governing part of a state; the second in the defending part, or the military; the third in the relation between all the parts; but the fourth has its essence in assigning to every individual, and to every order, the appropriate right, whether that be property, duty, function, or rank. Other states, therefore, present some analogy to the three first virtues, according to the predominant object which they pursue. But his own, as Plato contends, is a model analogous to the very highest of the virtues, or justice; for that in this state only the object is kept up, as a transcendent object, of suffering no man to assume functions by mere inheritance, but to every individual assigning that office and station for which nature seems to have prepared his qualifications.

This principle, so broadly expressed, would seem to require more frequent disturbances in the series of hereditary employments than Plato had contemplated in his last Book. Accordingly, he again acknowledges the importance of vigilantly reviewing the several qualifications of the citizens. The rest of the book is chiefly occupied with a psychological inquiry into a problem sometimes discussed in modern times (but thoroughly alien to the political problem of Plato), viz. whether, upon dividing the internal constitution of man into three elements—the irascible passions, the appetites of desire, and the rational principle—we are warranted in supposing three separate substances or hypostases in the human system, or merely three separate offices of some common substance: whether, in short, these differences are organic, or simply functional. But, besides that the discussion is both obscure and conducted by scholastic hair-splitting, it has too slight a relation to the main theme before us to justify our digressing for what is so little interesting.

BOOK THE FIFTH

At this point of the conversation, Adeimantus, at the suggestion of another person, recalls Socrates to the consideration of that foul blot upon his theory which concerns the matrimonial connexions of the army. Not only were these to commence in a principle of unmitigated sensuality—selection of wives by public, not by individual choice, and with a single reference to physical qualities of strength, size, agility ; but, which riveted the brutal tendencies of such a law, the wives, if wives they could be called, and the children that might arise from such promiscuous connexions, were to be held the common property of the order. Ties of appropriation, links of affection to this woman or to that child, were forbidden as a species of treason ; and, if (as in rare cases might happen) after all they should arise, the parties to such holy (but, Platonically speaking, such criminal) feelings must conceal them from all the world—must cherish them as a secret cancer at the heart, or as a martyrdom repeated in every hour. We represent marriages under the beautiful idea of unions. But these Platonic marriages would be the foulest publication of the nuptial sanctities. We call them self-dedications of one human creature to another, through the one sole means by which nature has made it possible for any exclusive dedication to be effected. But these Platonic marriages would be a daily renovation of disloyalty, revolt, and mutual abjuration. We, from human society, transfer a reflex of human charities upon inferior natures, when we see the roe-deer, for instance, gathering not into herds like their larger and more animal brethren, the fallow-deer or the red-deer, but into families—two parents everywhere followed by their own fawns, loving and beloved. Plato, from the brutal world, and from that aspect of the brutal world in which it is most brutal, transfers a feature of savage gregariousness which would ultimately disorganize as much as it would immediately degrade. In fact, the mere feuds of jealousy, frantic hatred, and competitions of authority, growing out of such an institution, would break up the cohesion of Plato's republic within

a single year. We all know of such institutions as actually realized. One case of former ages is recorded by Cæsar, Strabo, &c.; another of the present day exists amongst the ranges of the Himalaya, and has been brought by the course of our growing empire within British control. But they are, and have been, connected with the most abject condition in other respects; and probably it would be found, if such societies were not merely traversed by the glasses of philosophers in one stage of their existence, but steadily watched through a succession of generations, that it is their very necessity rapidly to decay, either by absorption into more powerful societies, built on sounder principles, or by inevitable self-extinction. Certain it is that a society so constituted through *all* its orders could breed no conservative or renovating impulses, since all motives of shame, glory, emulation, would operate upon a system untuned, or pitched in a far lower key, wherever sexual love and the tenderness of exclusive preferences were forbidden by law.

Adeimantus, by thus calling for a revision of a principle so revolting, impersonates to the reader his own feelings. He, like the young Athenian, is anxious to find himself in sympathy with one reputed to be so great a philosopher; or, at least, he is unwilling to suppose himself so immeasurably removed from sympathy. Still less can he concede, or even suspend, his own principles in a point which does not concern taste, or refinement of feeling, or transitory modes of decorum, or even political interests; in all these points, however rudely shocked, he would, in modest submission to a great name, have consented to suppose himself wrong. But this scruple belongs to no such faculty of taste, or judgment, or reasoning; it belongs to the primary conscience. It belongs to a region in which no hypothetic assumptions for the sake of argument, no provisional concessions, no neutralizing compromises are ever possible. By two tests is man raised above the brutes: 1st, As a being capable of religion (which presupposes him a being endowed with reason); 2dly, As a being capable of marriage. And effectually both capacities are thus far defeated by Plato—that both have a worm, a principle of corrosion, introduced into their several tenures. He does not, indeed, formally

destroy religion; he supposes himself even to purify it; but, by tearing away as impostures those legends in which, for a pagan, the effectual truth of the pagan mythology, as a revelation of power, had its origin and its residence, he would have shattered it as an agency or a sanction operating on men's oaths, &c. He does not absolutely abolish marriage; but, by limiting its possibility (and how?—under two restrictions, the most insidious that can be imagined, totally abolishing it for the most honoured order of his citizens, viz. the military order, and abolishing it for those men and women whom nature had previously most adorned with her external gifts), he does his utmost to degrade marriage, even so far as it is tolerated. Whether he designed it or not, marriage is now no longer a privilege, or an honorary distinction. On the contrary, *not* to be married is a silent proclamation that you are amongst the select children of the state—honoured by your fellow-citizens as one of their defenders—admired by the female half of the society as dedicated to a service of danger—marked out universally by the public zeal as one who possesses a physical superiority to other men—lastly, pointed out to foreigners for distinction, as belonging to a privileged class. *Are you married?* would be a question from which every man travelling abroad would shrink, unless he could say—*No.* It would be asking in effect—Are you of the inferior classes, a subaltern commanded by others, or a noble? And the result would be that, like poverty (not pauperism, but indigence or scanty means) at this day, marriage would still have its true, peculiar, and secret blessings, but, like poverty again, it would not flourish in the world's esteem, and, like that, it would prompt a system of efforts and of opinions tending universally in the very opposite direction.

Feeling—but, as a pagan, feeling not very profoundly—these truths, Adeimantus calls for explanations (secretly expecting modifications) of this offensive doctrine. Socrates, however (that is, Plato), offers none but such as are reaffirmations of the doctrine in other words, and with some little expansion of its details. The women selected as wives in these military marriages are to be partners with the men in martial labours. This unsexual distinction will require an

unsexual training. It is, therefore, one derivative law in Plato's Republic that a certain proportion of the young girls are to receive a masculine education, not merely assimilated to that of the men, but, by personal association of both sexes in the same *palæstra*, identical with that, and going on concurrently.

To this there are two objections anticipated.

1st, That, as the gymnastic exercises of the ancients were performed in a state of nudity (to which fact, combined with the vast variety of marbles easily worked by Grecian tools, some people have ascribed the premature excellence in Greece of the plastic arts), such a personal exposure would be very trying to female modesty, and revolting to masculine sensibilities. Perhaps no one passage in the whole works of Plato so powerfully reveals his visionary state of disregard to the *actual* in human nature, and his contempt of human instincts, as this horrible transition (so abrupt and so total) from the superstitious reserve [1] of Grecian society, combined, as in this place it is, with levity so perfect. Plato repudiates this scruple with something like contempt. He contends that it is all custom and use which regulates such feelings, and that a new training, made operative, will soon generate a new standard of propriety. Now, with our better views on such points, a plain man would tell the philosopher that, although use, no doubt, will reconcile us to much, still, after all, a better and a worse in such things does exist,

[1] "*Superstitious reserve of Greece*":—The possibility, however, of this Platonic dream as an idealism, together with the known practice of Sparta as a reality, are interesting as a commentary on the real tendencies of that Oriental seclusion and spurious delicacy imposed upon women which finally died away in the Roman system of manners,—by what steps, it would be very instructive to trace. Meantime, this much is evident—that precisely in a land where this morbid delicacy was enforced upon women, precisely in that land (the only one in such circumstances that ever reached an intellectual civilisation) where women were abridged in their liberty, men in their social refinement, the human race in its dignity, by the false requisitions as to seclusion, and by a delicacy spurious, hollow, and sensual, precisely there the other extreme was possible, of forcing upon women the most profligate exposure, and compelling them, amidst tears and shame, to trample on the very instincts of female dignity. So reconcilable are extremes, when the earliest extreme is laid in the unnatural.

previously to *any* use at all, one way or the other ; and that it is the business of philosophy to ascertain this better and worse, *per se*, so as afterwards to apply the best gravitation of this moral agency, called custom, in a way to uphold a known benefit,—not to waste it upon a doubtful one, still less upon one which, to the first guiding sensibilities of man, appears dangerous and shocking. If, hereafter, in these martial women, Plato should, under any dilemma, have to rely upon feminine qualities of delicacy or tenderness, he might happen to find that, with the characteristic and sexual qualities of his women, he had uprooted all the rest of their distinguishing graces ; that for a single purpose, arbitrary even in *his* system, he had sacrificed a power that could not be replaced. All this, however, is dismissed as a trivial scruple.

2dly, There is another scruple, however, which weighs more heavily with Plato, and receives a more pointed answer. The objection to a female soldier or a gladiatrix might be applied on a far different principle—not to what *seems*, but to what actually *is*—not by moral sentiment, but by physiology. Habit might make us callous to the spectacle of unfeminine exposures ; but habit cannot create qualities of muscular strength, hardihood, or patient endurance, where nature has denied them. These qualities may be improved, certainly, in women, as they may in men ; but still, as the improved woman in her athletic character must still be compared with the improved man, the scale, the proportions of difference, will be kept at the old level. And thus the old prejudice—that women are not meant (because not fitted by nature) for warlike tasks—will revolve upon us in the shape of a philosophic truth.

To a certain extent, Plato indirectly admits this, for (as will be seen) practically he allows for it in his subsequent institutions. But he restricts the principle of female inaptitude for war by the following suggestion :—The present broad distribution of the human species, according to which courage and the want of courage, muscular strength and weakness, are made to coincide with mere sexual distinctions, he rejects as false—not groundless, for there is a perceptible tendency to that difference—but still false for ordinary purposes. It may have a popular truth. But here, when the

question is about philosophic possibilities and extreme ideals, he insists upon substituting for this popular generality a more severe valuation of the known facts. He proposes, therefore, to divide the human race upon another principle. Men, though it is the characteristic tendency of their sex to be courageous, are not all courageous ; men, though sexually it is their tendency to be strong, are not all strong : many are so ; but some, in the other extreme, are both timid and feeble ; others, again, present us with a compromise between both extremes. By a parity of logic, women, though sexually and constitutionally unwarlike, pass through the same graduated range ; upon which scale, the middle qualities in *them* may answer to the lower qualities in the other sex—the higher to the middle. It is possible, therefore, to make a selection amongst the entire female population of such as are fitted to take their share in garrison duty, in the duty of military posts or of sentries, and even, to a certain extent, in the extreme labours of the field. Plato countenances the belief that, allowing for the difference in muscular power of women considered as animals (a mere difference of degree), there is no essential difference, as to power and capacities, between the human male and the female. Considering the splendour of his name (weighty we cannot call a man's authority whom so few profess to have read, but *imposing* at the least), it is astonishing that in the agitation stirred by the modern brawlers, from Mary Wollstonecraft downwards, in behalf of female pretensions to power, no more use should have been drawn from the disinterested sanction of Plato to these wild innovations. However, it will strike many that even out of that one inferiority conceded by Plato, taken in connexion with the frequent dependencies of wives and mothers upon human forbearance and human aids, in a way irreconcilable with war, those inferences might be forced, one after one, which would soon restore (as a direct logical consequence) that state of female dependency which at present nature and providence so beautifully accomplish through the gentlest of human feelings. Even Plato is obliged in practice to allow rather more on account of his one sole concession than his promises would have warranted ; for he stipulates that these young gladiatrices and other figurantes in the *palæstra* shall

not be put upon difficult or dangerous trials. Living in our day, he would have introduced into H.M.'s navy a class of midshipwomen, but would have exempted them, we presume, from all the night-watches, and from going aloft. This, however, might have been mere consideration for the tenderness of youth. But, again, in mature life, though he orders that the wives and the children shall march with the armed force to the seat of the campaign, and on the day of battle shall make their appearance in the rear (an unpleasant arrangement in our day of flying artillery and rocket brigade), he does not insist on their mixing in the *mêlée*. Their influence with the fighting division of the army is to lie in their visible presence. But surely at this point Plato overlooked the elaborate depression of that influence which his own system had been nursing. Personal presence of near female relatives, whether in storms at sea, or in battles, has always been supposed to work more mischief by distracting the commander's attention than good by reminding him of his domestic ties. And, since the loss of an East Indiaman (the Halsewell) about seventy years ago, in part ascribed to the presence of the captain's two daughters, the rules of the British service, we believe, have circumscribed the possibility of such very doubtful influences. But in Plato's Republic the influences must have been much more equivocal. A number of women and a number of children are supposed to be ranged on an eminence in the background. The women were undoubtedly, or had been, mothers; but to which of the children individually, and whether to any living child, was beyond their power to guess. On the assumption that any child to which, in former years, they might have given birth, were still in existence, then probably that child would be found amongst the young column of lookers-on in the rear. But, as to the men, even this conditional knowledge is impossible.[1] Multiplied precautions have been taken that it

[1] What I mean is that each individual amongst the women could know for certain whether she ever had been a parent, though not whether she still continued such: but to the men even this limited knowledge was denied. Their own hypothetic interest in the young rear-guard who were snatching a holiday spectacle from the bloody conflict of their possible papas would therefore reasonably sink below zero. It is to be hoped that Plato would not forbid the soldiers to

may be impossible. From the moment of birth the child has been removed to an establishment where the sternest measures are enforced to confound it beyond all power of recognition with the crowd of previous children. The object is to place a bar between this recognition and everybody,—the mother and all others alike. Can a cup of water be recovered when poured off into the Danube? Equally impossible, if Plato's intentions are fulfilled, to recover traces of identification with respect to any one of the public children. The public family, therefore, of wives and children are present, but with what probable result upon the sensibilities of the men we leave the reader to determine when we have put him in possession of Plato's motive to all this unnatural interference with human affections. Why had he from the first applied so large a body of power (wasted power, if not utilised) to the suppression of what most legislators would look to for their highest resources? It seems bad mechanics to convert *that* into a resistance, requiring vast expense of engineering to overcome it, which might obviously have been treated as a power of the first magnitude for overcoming other and inevitable resistance. Strong reasons must be brought for such an inversion of the ordinary procedure. What are they in Plato's system? Simply this: that from individual marriages and separate children not only many feuds arise between man and man, family and family,—a private interest is established as against other private interests,—but also a private parental interest is established in another sense, namely, against the public; a parental or family interest, differing from the public state interest, and often enough in mortal hostility to that interest.

Be it so. A danger, a pressure, is exposed by Plato in one direction—confronted by what we Christians should think a far heavier in another; or, to express it more strictly, a gain is sought in one direction—which gain seems to us fatally compensated by loss in another. But *that* is part of Plato's theory—*that* he confronts with his eyes open; and

distribute an occasional kicking amongst these young scoundrels, who would doubtless be engaged in betting on the several events as at a main of game cocks—an amusement so extensively patronized by Plato himself.

so far it might seem false logic to oppose him, because it is one of the postulates in effect on which his system rests. But we have a right to demand consistency: and, when Plato brings the wives and children on the field of battle in order to sustain the general sentiment of patriotism, he is virtually depending upon that power which he had previously renounced; he is throwing the weight of his reliance upon a providential arrangement which he had tossed aside not as useless merely, but as vicious; he is clinging in his distress to those sanctities, conjugal and parental, of which he had said in his self-confidence—"Behold! I will give you something better." And tolerably sure we are that, had Plato prosecuted the details of his theory into more of their circumstantialities, or had he been placed under the torture of a close polemic review, he would have been found reviving for its uses, and for its solution of many perplexities in practice, that very basis of female honour and modesty which by his practice and by his professions he has so earnestly laboured to destroy.

The reader will arrive probably at a pretty fixed opinion as to the service for state purposes likely to arise from this exhibition of a clamorous nursery, children and nurses, upon the field of battle. As a flag, banner, or ensign, if Plato could in any way contrive that the army should regard the nursery militant as the sacred depository of their martial honour, then it is probable that men would fight desperately for *that* considered as a trophy which they regarded but lightly as a household memorial. But this would be unattainable. Even with us, and our profounder Christian feelings, the women attendant upon an army (who, in the Thirty Years' War, on the Catholic side often amounted to another army) have never been elevated into "a pignus sanctum militiæ." The privates and subaltern officers might readily have come into such a view; but the commander-in-chief with his staff would have set their faces against so dangerous a principle—it would have fettered the movements of an army too much; and in most cases would defeat any sudden manœuvres in the presence of an enemy. Mere justice to human powers demands that the point of honour for armies, or for sections of armies (such as regiments, &c.), should be

placed in that which can move concurrently with the main body, no matter for roads, weather, want of provisions, or any other circumstances. Even artillery, therefore, though a subject of martial jealousy, is not made absolutely coincident with the point of martial honour. And another consideration is this—that not only no object ever can be raised into that mode of dignity when all members of the army are not parties to its consecration, but even the enemy must be a party to this act. Accordingly, the sanctity of the flag, as the national honour in a symbolic form confided to a particular officer, is an inheritance transmitted downwards through many generations of every nation in Christendom. Now, if Plato's republic were even able to translate the point of honour (which for the Greeks consisted in a ritual celebration of the battle by sacrifices, together with a choral chant, and also in the right to erect a frail memorial of the victory[1]) to the capture or preservation of the women and children,—still this change could not win a general ratification; for the neighbouring states would not be persuaded to terms of "reciprocity." What! not if they also were Platonic states? Ay, but that is impossible; for Plato himself lays the foundation of hope, and the prospects of conquest, for his own state, in the weakness (growing out of luxury, as also out of the conjugal and parental relations) presumable throughout the neighbouring states.

These ambulatory nurseries, therefore, never could be made to interest the honour even of a Platonic army, since no man would consent to embark his own honour upon a stake to which the enemy afforded no corresponding stake. Always to expose your own honour to loss with no reversionary gain under any contingency; always to suffer anxiety in your own person with no possibility of retaliating this anxiety upon the enemy—would have been too much for the temper of Socrates; and we fear that he would have left even

[1] "*Frail*," not from any indisposition to gasconade: but there was a dark superstition which frightened the Greeks from raising any durable monuments to a triumph over Greeks: judicial calamities would descend upon the victors, *Nemesis* would be upon their haunches, if they exulted too loudly. Stone, therefore, marble, and brass, were forbidden materials for the *tropœa*! they were always made of wood. If not, look out for squalls ahead!

Xantippe herself, with all her utensils of every kind, as a derelict for the benefit of the enemy in dry weather, when a deluge from upper windows might not have been unwelcome. But, if no honour were pledged upon the nursery in the rear, the next step would certainly be that under difficult circumstances, stress of weather, short provisions, or active light cavalry in the rear, the nursery would become the capital nuisance of the army. Ambulatory hospitals, though so evidently a personal interest of the nearest kind, are trying to soldiers when overworked ; but ambulatory nurseries, with no intelligible motive for their presence, continual detachments and extra guards on *their* account, with an enemy laughing at the nursery uproars, would cause a mutiny even if Plato were there in person. Sentiment but ill accords with the gross realities of business, as Charles Lamb illustrated (rather beyond the truth in that case) with regard to Lord Camelford's corpse [1] when clearing the custom-house for interment under an aged tree in Switzerland ; and to hawk along with an army a *menagerie* of spectators, against a day of battle, would be an arrangement so little applicable to any but select expeditions that the general overturn of nursery waggons once a day, with constant fracture of skulls, would be the least tragical issue within reasonable expectation. Not being "sacred" as depositaries of honour, they would soon rank as curses. And, speaking gravely, when we reflect on the frequency, even in Christian lands, with which, under the trials of extreme poverty, the parental tie gives way—what other result than open insubordination could be expected from a plan which was adapted to a mere melodramatic effect, at the price of comfort to the army throughout the whole campaign ? Not being associated with patriotic honour, as we have endeavoured to show, and the parental tie being so aërial in any case where neither mother nor child belonged to the individual, but also so exceedingly questionable in the case of Plato's artifices for concealment having succeeded to the letter, what visionary statesmanship would it prove to build for so much as a day's service, or for

[1] Lord Camelford died 10th March 1804, from a wound received in a duel fought in London with a Mr. Best. He directed his body to be buried in a favourite spot in Canton Berne.—M.

an extra effort, upon the presence of those who could have little other value in the soldier's eye than that they were natives of the same city with himself!

Even this, however, is not the worst. Pursuing to the last the regulations of Plato, the reader is more and more surprised by the unconscious inconsistency which emerges: for, whilst recollecting the weight of service, the stress, which Plato has thrown upon the parental affection in this case, he finds still further proof of the excessive degradation to which Plato has reduced the rank of that affection as a moral principle; in short, he finds him loading it with responsibility as a duty, whilst he is destroying it as an honour, and polluting it as an enjoyment. Let us follow the regulations to their end:—The guardians of the state, as they are called in their civil relation,—the soldiers, as they are called with respect to foreign states and to enemies in general,—have been originally selected for their superior qualities of body. Thus the most natural (because the most obvious) grounds of personal vanity are here at once consecrated by state preference and peculiar rank. In civilized states, these advantages being met and thwarted at every turning by so many higher modes of personal distinction—knowledge, special accomplishments applicable to special difficulties, intellect generally, experience large and comprehensive or local and peculiar, riches, popular influence, high birth, splendid connexions—the consequence is that mere physical advantages rank as the lowest class of pretensions, and practically are not of much avail, except as regards beauty when eminent in women, though even for that the sphere is narrow; since what woman by mere beauty ever drew after her such a train of admirers as a few of our modern female writers in verse? Consequently the arrogance in these soldiers of Plato, finding themselves at once acknowledged as the best models of physical excellence in the state, and also, in the second place, raised to the rank of an aristocracy on account of this excellence, would be unlimited. It would be crossed by no rival mode of excellence, since no other would be recognised and countenanced by the state.

With this view of their own vast superiority, naturally—and, in a state conformed to that mode of thinking, almost

excusably—looking upon their own rank as a mere concession of justice to their claims of birth, the soldiers would review their condition in other respects. They would then find that, under the Platonic laws, they enjoyed two advantages: viz. first, a harem, furnished with the select women of the state, having precisely the sort of personal pre-eminence corresponding to their own,—a modern Mahometan polygamy, in fact, but without that appropriation which constitutes the luxury of Mahometan principles; secondly, a general precedency. On the other hand, to balance these privileges, and even with the most dissolute men greatly to outweigh them, they would find—

1. That they had, and could have, no property; not a fragment: even their arms would be the property of the state; even the dress of mail, in which the ὁπλιται or *men-at-arms* (heavy-armed cuirassiers, or cataphractoi) must be arrayed, would return to the ὁπλοθηκη, or *arsenal*, in time of peace: not a chattel, article of furniture, or personal ornament, but would have a public stamp, as it were, upon it, making it felony to sell, or give, or exchange it. It is true that, to reconcile the honourable men, the worshipful paupers, to this austere system, Plato tells us that the other order of citizens will not be rich: nobody, in fact, will be allowed to possess any great wealth. But there is still a difference between something and nothing. And then, as to this supposed *maximum* of riches which is to be adopted, no specific arrangements are shown by which, in consistency with any freedom of action, further accumulation can be intercepted, or actual possession ascertained.

2. "But," says Plato, "what would the fellows want with property? Food, is it? Have they not *that* food at the public cost, and better for their health than any which they would choose? Drink—is there not the river? And, if by ill luck it should happen to prove a χειμαρρους, or mountain torrent dependent upon floods and upon snows melting in summer, is there not the rain at all times in cisterns and tanks, for those who prefer it? Shoemakers and weavers—(if it is shoes and tunics they want)—are they not working throughout the year for their benefit?" All this is true; but still they are aware that their own labours and hardships

have a money value which would amply earn food and clothes, and that, on the general scale of remuneration for mercenary soldiership in Greece, adding their dangers to their daily work, they might obtain enough to purchase even such criminal superfluities as wine.

3. At present, again, this honoured class have many wives; none of their fellow-citizens more than one. But here, again, what a mockery of the truth! That one is really and exclusively the wife of him whom she has married; dedicates her love and attentions and her confidential secrecy to that man only; knows and retains her own children in her own keeping; and these children regard their own parents as their own sole benefactors. How gladly would the majority of the guardians, after two years' experience of the dissolute barrack, accept in exchange the quiet and hallowed privacy of the artisan's cottage!

4. The soldiers again, it is urged, enjoy something of that which sweetens a sailor's life, and keeps it from homely insipidity—viz. the prospect of adventure, and of foreign excursions: even danger, kept within just limits, is a mode of pleasurable stimulation. But under what restriction do the Platonic soldiery enjoy these prospects of peril and adventure? Never but on a service of peculiar hardship. For it is a badge of their slavery to public uses that for them only there exists no liberty of foreign travel. All the rest, throughout the city, may visit foreign lands: the honourable class only is confined to the heartless tumult of its dissolute barracks.

Plato evidently felt these bitter limitations of free agency to be, at the same time, oppressive and degrading. Still he did not think himself at liberty to relax them. His theory he conceived to be a sort of watch-work, which would keep moving if all the parts were kept in their places, but would stop on any disturbance of their interactions. Not being able to give any relief, the next thing was to give compensation. And, accordingly, in addition to the sensual bait of polygamy already introduced as the basis of his plan, he now proceeds to give a still wider licence to appetite. It takes the shape of a dispensation in practice from a previous special restriction in one particular direction: the whole

body of guardians, and their female associates, or "wives," are excluded from conjugal intercourse except within strict limits as to age; from the age of twenty to forty for the women, of thirty to fifty for the men, is the range within which they are supposed to be capable of producing a healthy race of children. Within those limits they are licensed: not further. But, by way of compensation, unlimited concubinage is tolerated for the seniors; with this one dreadful proviso—that any children born from such connexions, as presumably not possessing the physical stamina, or other personal advantages looked for from more carefully selected parents, must be murdered. Born of fathers who possess no personal property, these children could have no patrimony, nor succeed to any place as a mechanic artisan or labourer. Succeeding to a state father, they succeed to nothing; they are thrown as waifs or strays on the state bounty; and for that they are not eligible, as not having been born within the privilege of the state regulations. No party, therefore, known to the state being responsible for their maintenance, they must die. And, because the ancients had a scruple (no scruple of mercy or of relenting conscience, but of selfish superstition) as to taking life by violence from any creature not condemned under some law, the mode of death must be by exposure on the open hills; where either the night air, or the fangs of a wolf, oftentimes of the great dogs still preserved in most parts of Greece (and traced back to the days of Homer as the public nuisances of travellers), usually put an end to the unoffending creature's life.[1]

Now, with this sensual bounty on infanticide, and this regular machinery for calling into existence such ill-fated blossoms on the tree of life, and for immediately strewing them on the ground by the icy wind of death, cutting adrift the little boat to go down the Niagara of violent death in the very next night after its launching on its unknown river of life—could Plato misconceive the result, could he wish to misconceive it, as regarded the pieties of parental love? To make human life cheaper and more valueless than that of the brutes—is that the way to cherish the sanctity of parental

[1] See paper *Modern Greece* in Vol. VII. pp. 331-367.—M.

affection ; upon which affection, however, elsewhere, Plato throws so heavy a burden of duty ?

Plato would have been surprised had he anticipated the discoveries of modern experience as to the effect of marriages so assorted in point of age as he has supposed. This one arrangement, by mere disproportion of the sexes, would have introduced strange disturbances into his system.[1] But, for general purposes, it is more important to remark that the very indulgences of Plato are sensual : from a system in itself sensual in the most cruel degree Plato grants a dispensation only to effect an Otaheitian carnival of licentious appetite, connected with a contempt of human life which is excessive even for paganism ; since in *that* the exposure of children was allowed as a relief from supposed evils of nature, or (as we now see in Oude, and heretofore in Cutch) was practised by way of relief from what were regarded as *social* evils, viz. the necessity, in the absence of infanticide, which arose for giving daughters in marriage to men that were their inferiors in birth ; whereas here, under the system of Plato, the evil is self-created by the cruel and merciless philosopher with the view of meeting and counteracting ruinous results which nobody had caused but himself.

[1] See Sadler and others on the relations of *age* in the two parties to a marriage as the effectual determining causes of *sex* in the children born from such marriage. [The reference, I suppose, is to *Treatise on the Law of Population* by Michael T. Sadler, published in 1830.—M.]

POSTSCRIPT[1]

Plato at present seems protected by a superstitious reverence; for all reverence must be looked on as superstitious which is guaranteed neither by disinterested and adequate authority, nor by personal acquaintance with its object. The readers of Plato, if such a class anywhere exists, must be aware of his profound failure in an attempt to explore the etymology of a few Grecian words. Such a failure, considering the etymological resources then at the command of Greek philology, was inevitable. It is no subject for blame. But not the less it suggests, as its own direct consequence, what *is* a subject for the heaviest, viz. the obstinate vassalage to purely *verbal* fancies which is continually a fruitful source of erring and misleading speculation to Plato. In the last book of *The Republic* we have a lively instance of this. Plato there argues two separate questions: first, the Immortality of the Soul (more elaborately treated in the *Phædo*); secondly, the grounds upon which he expelled the Poets, and Homer beyond all others, from his immaculate Commonwealth. Of this ideal Commonwealth it is sufficient to say that the one capital vice which has ruined Asia, and laid her (speaking generally) a contemptible and helpless victim at the feet of Christendom, viz. polygamy and sexual effeminacy carried to the last conceivable excesses, is by Plato laid down deliberately as the basis of his social system.

[1] What is here printed as a "Postscript" appeared really as a portion of De Quincey's "Prefatory Notice" to the volume of his Collective Writings containing his reprint of the Plato paper—*i.e.* vol. ix, published in 1858. In that volume, besides the Plato paper, there were reprinted eight other articles, including one on Pope and one on Herodotus; and the "Prefatory Notice," after speaking of Herodotus, Plato, and Pope as the three personages in the volume most entitled to the designation "Leaders in Literature," selects Plato in particular for these further remarks.—M.

And, as if this were not enough, infanticide is superadded as the crown and glorifying *aureola* of the whole diabolical economy. After this, the reader will feel some curiosity to learn what it is by which the Poets could signalize their immorality in Plato's eyes. The Platonic reason assigned for tabooing the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and the whole of the Tragic drama, is this: and it will be seen that the first manifestation of the evil redressed lies in the scenic poets, but the fountain of the offence lies in Homer. Tragedy, says Plato, seeks as its main object to extort tears and groans from the audience in sympathy with the distress on the stage. Well, why not? Because there is some obligation (where seated, or by whom enacted, Plato is careful to conceal) which makes such sympathy, or such expressions of sympathy, improper. But in what way improper? The insinuation is—as being effeminate, and such as men rightly seek to hide. Here, then, we have, as the main legislatorial sanction and rule of conduct, a sensitive horror of indecorum. And the supposed law, or rule, to which Plato appeals for his justification, is a pure verbal chimera, without even a plausible ground. And for such a reason the sole noble revelation of moral feeling in Grecian poetry is laid under an interdict. But why is Homer compromised by this interdict? Simply on the ground (a most false one) that he is originally answerable for the dramatic stories employed by the scenic poets. Now, in order to show the careless reading of Plato, it is sufficient to remark briefly that a large proportion of the Greek tragedies move by terror, by horror, by sympathy with the unknown mysteries surrounding human nature, and are of a nature to repel tears, and that for three out of four such groundworks of the tragic poetry Homer is noways responsible. It is also altogether overlooked by Plato that in the grandeur of the choral music, in the mazes of the symbolic dances, and in the awful magnitude of the spectacle (spectacle and spectators taken as a whole), a provision is made for elevating the mind far above the region of effeminate sensibilities. Milton, with his Christian standard of purity and holiness, found *that* beyond measure noble which Plato, the organizer of polygamy and wholesale infanticide, rejects as immoral!

KANT IN HIS MISCELLANEOUS ESSAYS[1]

SIR CHRISTOPHER,

I have talked with you so often upon the grand philosophic question of this age,—the value and interpretation of the doctrines advanced by the great Thinker of Koenigsberg,—that to you I shall not need any apology for drawing the public attention to anything connected with that subject. Perhaps the direct philosophy of Kant, meaning by that term the Critical or Transcendental System, is not altogether fitted for a popular miscellany,—though, candidly speaking, I am not quite sure of *that*; for one excellence of your thrice-famous journal lies in its vast compass. There is no note within the gamut of human inquiries, and the largest scale of human interests, which has not been sounded by you on one occasion or other; and the true caution seems to be—not to reject such themes altogether, but (as in reality you have done) to keep them down within their just proportions. After a certain period of discussion, when books have familiarized us with their names, even the most abstruse inquirers after truth become objects of a mere popular interest in a limited degree. Fontenelle finds it convenient to expound one mode of philosophy to a female audience;

[1] One of De Quincey's earliest contributions to *Blackwood*,—having appeared there in August 1830, in the familiar form of a letter to the Editor. It was not overtaken by De Quincey for his own Collective Edition; but a reprint of it was added to what had been the thirteenth volume of that edition when it was reissued by Messrs. Black as vol. xii of their Sixteen-volume Edition.—M.

Voltaire and Algarotti another. And such facts, possible for our ancestors of three generations back, are much more possible for ourselves, or *ought* to be, consistently with our pretensions. Yes, it will be said, mere abstruseness or subtlety, simply considered, is no *prima facie* objection to the policy of entertaining a great question even before a popular and mixed audience. It is not for its abstruseness that we shrink from the Transcendental Philosophy, but for *that* taken in connexion with its visionariness, and its disjunction from all the practical uses of life. In an age which, if ever any *did*, idolatrizes the tangible and the material, the shadowy (but not therefore unreal or baseless) texture of metaphysics is certainly called into a very disadvantageous comparison. Its objects are not those of any parts of knowledge to which modern curiosity is directed; neither are its weapons such as modern education has qualified us to wield. We are powerless for the means, and without reverence for the ends. The subsidiary pursuits of Logic, Psychology, &c., languish under the same neglect in this country. And thus, every avenue being barred to this great and central philosophy, our ignorance, gross in this point as that of the Esquimaux, becomes reciprocally cause and effect in relation to our want of interest. Yet, after all is said and done, and when vassalage to the eye is most matured, and the empire of sense absolutely systematized by education, still, under every obstacle,—oppression, thwarting, stifling,—such is the imperishable dignity of the human mind that all the great problems concerning its own nature and destination, which, without one exception, happen to be metaphysical, must and will victoriously return upon us.

> "Of Providence, Foreknowledge, Will, and Fate,
> Fixed Fate, Free Will, Foreknowledge Absolute,"

the Ruined Angels of Milton (*Par. Lost*, b. ii.) converse, as of the highest themes which could occupy *their* thoughts; and these are also the highest for man. Immortality—is *that* a natural prerogative of the human soul, or a privilege superinduced upon its original nature? God—does He exist by laws capable of a regular demonstration, as Descartes (borrowing from the Schoolmen), and, upon different grounds,

Samuel Clarke, imagine? Or is He far transcendent to every mode of apodeictic evidence? Is man free, *i.e.* has that stupendous phenomenon of human nature—the will, or the practical reason—absolute autonomy? Or is *that* also under laws of mechanism? In fact, all parts of knowledge have their origin in metaphysics, and, finally, perhaps revolve into it. Mathematics has not a foot to stand upon which is not purely metaphysical. It begins in Metaphysics; and their several orbits are continually intersecting —as in the questions arising on the Higher Curves, the Differential Calculus, and generally on the Infinite. Natural Philosophy even, which might have been presumed to have the least of a supersensuous origin, plants its first steps—those, namely, which concern Motion, Rest, Gravity, Force, Action, Reaction, Plenum, Vacuum, &c.—on ground which is so abundantly Metaphysical that the shallowest philosopher has been forced to see that the solution of the difficulties, in any case where they *are* solved, and the anarchy of opinions in some of those cases where they are not, alike rest, not upon experiments enough or too few, but simply upon a better or worse theory, or metaphysical construction by the understanding of the known facts of the case. These facts are to be exhibited in a system, *i.e.* in their relation to each other; and that can be done only under the guidance of metaphysical principles. And this necessity is absolute; no speculations on these elementary parts of Physics, — not those which are the most obstinate in nominally abjuring Metaphysics,—can really and *bona fide* forgo this necessity. As well might a man abjure Geometry when investigating the affections of the Parabola. "*Hypotheses non fingo*," says Sir Isaac Newton; yet, as Kant has shown, in the business of a Vacuum he not only *did* introduce a hypothesis, but that hypothesis a metaphysical one, and (worse still!) a needless one. Many are the men, indeed, who have railed at Metaphysics by metaphysical arguments, and have sought to establish the baselessness or the uselessness of Logic, Ontology, &c., by arguments drawn wholly from the armouries of those sciences. The late *Walking Stewart*, for example,[1] spent his life and some scores of volumes in metaphycizing

[1] See *ante*, Vol. III, pp. 93-120.—M.

against Metaphysics. And so, in Physics, no matter how much opposed in other respects, all investigators of nature in her earliest *incunabula*, and expounders of the "dark foundations" upon which her elementary forces repose, are compelled, in substance and reality, to enter the province of Metaphysics, however much they may disown the name, and can excel their predecessors or antagonists only in so far as good Metaphysics will furnish better results than bad.

Meantime, my dear Sir Kit, for myself—with my present purposes—the question is of no moment. Put what value you will on Metaphysics, your appreciation is a matter in which neither Kant nor myself can be much interested. Not Kant; for a disparagement applied to the science *in abstract* cannot personally or separately affect the individual. That Sparta which has fallen to his lot, sterile as it may be, it is yet possible that he may have ornamented and developed to the extent of its capacity. On the other hand, not myself; for I am not at this time meditating any incursion into that unpopular region. On some future day it is very possible that I may trouble you with a short exposition of the Transcendental Philosophy, so framed that, without forgoing one iota of technical rigour, it shall convey, for the first time to merely English ears, a real account of what that philosophy is. For take notice of this,—that everything yet published on the subject of Kant in the English language errs by one of two defects. Either it is mere nonsense, in a degree possible only to utter and determined ignorance of the German language; or it is so close a translation of the *ipsissima verba* of Kant as to offer no sort of assistance to an uninitiated student, to say nothing of the barbarous effect produced by a German structure of sentence and a terminology altogether new. To the former class belongs the long paper in an early number of the *Edinburgh Review*,[1] written, as I judged upon internal evidence, and have since had confirmed to me, by Dr. Thomas Brown; to the latter, the various essays of Mr. Wirgman, published in the *Encyclopædia Londinensis*. These, like some thousands of similar works published in Germany

[1] The paper appeared in the 2d number of the *Edinburgh* (January 1803) in the form of a review of a French work.—M.

and Denmark, are sure to be in the right by benefit of an artifice which, at the same time, makes them utterly useless: viz. by evading every attempt at commenting upon difficulties, or illustrating them, or giving their own sense of ambiguous passages, under one uniform caution of simply rehearsing and echoing the identical words (unaltered, uncleared, unexpanded by so much as a little parenthesis or note) of the master himself. Hence, whilst we have thousands (yes, thousands !) of German or Latin "Commentaries," "Dictionaries," &c., on the Philosophy of Kant, they are pretty generally, as I have often said, to be regarded as no more than mere *concordances*, more or less carefully compiled. If you would know the meaning of the word "*Transcendental*,"[1] for instance, the Dictionary of Schmidt, or any other contemptible work of that kind, will be sure to give you Kant's own definition of it; and it will also collect laboriously from all Kant's writings a pompous enumeration of the various cases to which he applies this term; but not a syllable will you find of any attempt to harmonize their several applications, and to evolve the common principle

[1] On this word *transcendental*, as most arbitrarily distinguished from the word transcendent, Mr. Coleridge says (*Biographia Literaria*, vol. i. p. 241) that the distinction is "observed by our elder divines and philosophers whenever they express themselves *scholastically*. Dr. Johnson, indeed, has confounded the two words; but his own authorities do not bear him out." Nothing can be more unfounded; and the best proof that it is so lies in this,—that the schoolmen themselves, whom our elder divines, &c., are here supposed to follow, never dreamed of any distinction. Neither was their use of these words, either one or other, at all akin to Kant's. In the scholastic use of the word *transcendentalis*, it was opposed to *prædicamentalis*; if two correlates, as, *e.g.*, Father and Son, fall under the category of Relation, they were then said to be prædicamental notions; but, if the two correlates, as, *e.g.*, Causa and Causatum, Subject and Adjunct, did *not* fall under that category, but transcended the limits of all the categories collectively, in that case they were said to be transcendental notions. Now, though it is true that a Kantean category and an Aristotelian category are very different things,—the latter being a mere inert abstraction or generalization, and the former a true operative *conditio sine qua non* in the genesis of all our thoughts,—yet, so far as our present purpose requires, we may compare them by saying that the transcendental in Kant's system was so far from *transcending* the categories that the transcendental, and that only, constituted the categories.

which gives unity to so many apparent differences; no, nor a single attempt at anticipating and smoothing the difficulties likely to arise in the effort to grasp so subtle an idea, nor an atom of illustration wrought out *proprio marte*. In short, what assistance you might expect from an index of parallel passages which should bring all the acceptations of a word under your view at one instant, *that*, and no more, you may promise yourself from the commentators of Kant. And this is the more disgusting because Kant not only had no talent for communicating ideas luminously, but had even the good sense to be aware of his own deficiencies in that respect, and *publicly* to avow them. After that avowal, it became criminal in a *soi-disant* commentator on Kant to rest contentedly in the words as he found them. Neither, indeed, had it been otherwise, and that Kant, instead of the obscurest had been the most luminous of expounders, could it have happened that another expounder, who had really mastered his meaning, would have uniformly acquiesced in his particular way of explaining it. We see, for instance, in Algebra, that the clear and most determinate truths of that science are presented in a different way and order by each successive teacher: *quot homines, tot rationes docendi.* And hence we are forced upon a very unpleasant conviction, in regard to modern Germany, viz. that, beyond any other nation, she breeds a race of sciolists, who derive a strange pleasure from wielding a pompous machinery of distinctions and technicalities, which they do not even fancy themselves to understand. For it is evident that, upon the faith even of a *fancied* knowledge, they would have courage to venture some fragment at least of an occasional illustration from their own stores. It must happen too, in some instances, that they would differ a little from their master. The main doctrines of a great systematic work may have too logical a cohesion to allow of this: grant one, you grant all; but still, in a very diffusive philosophy, there is room in some minor point for the most confiding disciple to hang a doubt perhaps, or an insinuation of a conditional demur. If nothing must be absolutely suspected, still (as in the French Reign of Terror) it may be suspected of being suspicious. The very blindest allegiance will allow of this. But, naturally, where all is chaos and darkness, there

can be as little of sincere doubt or hesitation as of self-originated illustration.

However, all this is by the way; for, though my statement of Kant's system will be very different, in these particulars, from those which load the German catalogues for the last thirty-five years, yet at present I shall cautiously abstain from every part of his works which belongs to him in his quality of founder of a new philosophy. The best way to a presumptive or analogical appreciation of a man's pretensions in matters which we do not well understand is to try him in those which we *do*. Metaphysics are pretty generally out of the reach of a nation made up of practical men of business. To judge a metaphysician directly is therefore out of our province; but, indirectly, we may fairly enough compute his amount of power by observing how he acquits himself on that neutral ground which is common to all intellectual nations. Civil Polity, for example, Natural Theology, Political Economy—these are parts of knowledge which furnish an arena not less to the subtleties of the speculative than to the good sense of the practical. Now, it happens that on these, and other subjects of a more miscellaneous nature, there exists a large body of essays written *occasionally* (*i.e.*, in the philosophic sense of that term, as occasions arose to draw them forth) by Kant at many different periods of his long life. These have been collected since his death, and published in four octavo volumes, under the title of *Kant's Vermischte Schriften* (Kant's Miscellaneous Writings). The editor, Tieftrunk, was personally acquainted with Kant; a man of talent, and one of the few, perhaps, who really understood him. His notes, therefore, in the rare cases where he gives any, are valuable; and much to be lamented it is that he did not give us more. It is also matter of regret, as with reference to my present popular aim, that the essays themselves have too little of a literary cast: too generally they have a scientific leaning, and always a scientific diction and mode of treating the subject. In reality Kant was a bad writer, and in some respects a pedant, and also, in a qualified sense (and without meaning the least disrespect to him), something of a brute. That is to say, though—from an early horror which he conceived for the character of

a mere scholastic dreamer, unfitted to take his place in the business of real life—he affected, in his own person, the manners and knowledge of a man of the world, sought the society of ladies, and did not shrink from that of kings, soldiers, nobles, foreigners, &c. ; and though, in the same spirit and as part of that policy, he acted on the memorable counsel given to a Grecian philosopher[1] and "sacrificed to the Graces" ; though he went so far even as to write an illustrative essay on the Sublime and the Beautiful, which he did his best to make popular by making it determinately shallow and trivial ; though in the same spirit he seasoned all his works with elegant citations from classical poets—always apposite, however trite: yet, under all these disguises, it is very evident that Kant's original determination was to a coarse, masculine pursuit of science, and that literature in its finer departments, whose essence is power and not knowledge, was to him, at all parts of his life, an object of secret contempt. Out of regard to what he considered the prejudices of society, it is true he concealed his contempt, and perhaps, in its whole extent, he did not even avow it to himself ; but it is clear that it lurked in his inner nature. What, then ? do I pretend to know Kant better than he knew himself ? In some things, perhaps, I do. How, for instance, I ask, could that man have had any sense for the graces of style in the largest meaning of that word,—that is, for the mode of presenting a subject, of effecting the transitions and connexions ; for the artifices by which parts are brought forward into prominent relief, or withdrawn from too conspicuous a station ; for the arts of preparation, of recapitulation, of peroration, together with the whole world of refinements which belong to a beautiful and impressive diction,—how, I demand, could *he* have had any organ for the perception of all this who in his own case, and in those works which he most of all designed as the classical monuments of his own power, shows uniformly that, in a question of *manner*, he knows of no higher a purpose that a man can or ought to have than in any way whatsoever, no matter how

[1] Would that he had adopted the *whole* counsel given in that instance—*to sacrifice to the Graces and to Perspicuity ;* ταις Χαρισιν και τη Σαφηνεια.

clumsily, disordinately, ungracefully,—no matter with what perplexity or confusion, tautology or circumlocution,—to deliver himself of a meaning? In some degree this is certainly surprising; for Kant was really a good scholar, at least as respected Latin. He had, indeed, been a schoolfellow of Ruhnken, that admirable master of classical learning; he had corresponded with him; and he wrote Latin excellently, indeed a sort of Latin very much superior to what passes for good amongst ourselves. But, for all that, he wrote his own language most uncouthly; some would say *barbarously*, but that would be going too far. Joseph Scaliger, in the Introduction to his Annotations on Manilius, insists, very properly, on the distinction between *barbare loqui* and *incondite loqui*. This was precisely the difference between Wolf (the systematizer of Leibnitz) and Kant. Wolf, in our Queen Anne's time, who wrote in a piebald hybrid diction, made up of German, French, and Latin, might be said to write *barbare*; Kant, *incondite*, *i.e.* without composition or digestion. Frederick Schlegel, who was eternally weaving false refinements, represents Kant's style as the product of a deliberate system, and the result of infinite pains. Nothing can be more untrue; mere carelessness, combined with fulness of thought, self-confounded in the tumult of discharging itself, accounts for all that distinguishes his style. It is said that Kant was jealous of the reputation of Leibnitz. Perhaps, though in a way that never disturbed his candour, he was; and in some great endowments undoubtedly he had the advantage of Leibnitz; but in others he was vastly his inferior, and in none more than in this very quality of style. The philosophic style of Leibnitz is excellent; to subjects already difficult in themselves he brings no superadded difficulties of language. In fact, Leibnitz had lived too much in Paris for that. German prolixity and involution are inevitably pruned away by intercourse with French models.

One or two of these smaller essays of Kant, therefore, with all their defects—that is, with the defect *quoad hoc* (or relatively to a popular treatment) of too great a bias to severe science, and with the *absolute* defect of a bad style, and bad in that way which least allows of a remedy being applied in any faithful translation—I purpose to lay before

your readers, not in a full version, but in a critical abstract. Allow me, however, to introduce them by a few general remarks on Kant's habits of thought and on those peculiarities in his literary character and opinions which are likely to be most offensive to English readers, unless previously warned and taught to allow for them.

One fact, which struck me by accident, and not until after a long familiarity with Kant's writings, is this,—that in all probability Kant never read a book in his life. This is paradoxical, and undoubtedly is in the very teeth of general fame, which represents him to have been a prodigious student in all parts of knowledge, and therefore, of necessity, it may be thought, a vast reader. A pretty general student he certainly was, but not, therefore, a great reader. And, fully conceding his great attainments, I still adhere to my thesis, that Kant never read a book. What! none? No, none at all; no book whatsoever. The books of which he read most were perhaps books of voyages and travels; for he himself gave lectures on what he called *Physical Geography, i.e.* descriptive sketches of our planet, both with reference to those obvious features of its terraqueous distribution and arrangement which constitute the sum of what is usually understood by geography, and also with reference to its geologic structure and the classification and condition of its human occupants. Books of that kind, which are made up of independent notices, and a vast variety of details, could not be read by any process of shorthand; and these he borrowed from his own publisher (Hartknoch), and most unwillingly, I venture to say, glanced his eye probably over the whole,—pausing, perhaps, to dwell a little upon any passage where a prominent word or two might give a promise of some interesting discussion or statement. But, wherever the business of the writer was not chiefly with facts, but with speculations built on facts, Kant's power of thought gave him a ready means of evading the labour of reading the book. Taking the elementary principles of the writer, as stated by himself or another, and supposing that he thought it worth his pains, he would then *integrate* these principles for himself; that is to say, he would supply all that was wanting as a complement to an entire systematic hypothesis.

In this way he judged of Plato, Berkeley, and many others. Locke he had evidently read only in an outline ; and authors of obscurer name, such as Plotinus, Boethius, Cudworth, and thousands of others, he had never so much as looked into. Yet these were writers in his own department ; and, if he would not read *them*, it may be presumed that (unless for relaxation) he would read nobody. For this abstinence, so long as he was forming his own system, I give him credit. Having his own principles fully conceived more than thirty years before he brought them forward in a full development, he was perfectly in the right to retreat from everything that could disturb their evolution ; but, once having matured his own scheme of philosophy, undoubtedly it was his duty to have examined the writings of others who had trod the same ground ; as in this way only he could ascertain the amount of his coincidences with former philosophers. These are, in fact, very numerous in Kant ; whilst the air of intrepid originality with which he uniformly presents both his principles and their consequences forbids us to suppose that he was aware of them as such. I readily grant that, if an elder philosopher advances a truth as an insulated fact, and afterwards another deduces that same truth in a regular way from principles peculiar to himself, the second propounder has a right to esteem himself under no obligation to the first. But he will do well in policy to notice the coincidence, and to point out the systematic tenure which it has obtained from himself, in opposition to the loose footing on which it stood previously. It is undeniable, however, that in many instances Kant has not the excuse which I have here suggested for him ; he brings forward truths not at all better demonstrated or illustrated or applied than they had been by others as pure novelties, and all for want of reading. The same want of reading is conspicuous in another class of cases, viz. those where he has missed the most tempting opportunities for applying his own undoubted principles to the exposure of errors countenanced by popular writers—errors of which he was not aware ; for we may be sure that no man willingly forgoes such challenges, as it were, to the victorious application of his own principles.

Secondly, it must not be concealed that Kant is an enemy

to Christianity. Not content with the privilege of speaking in an infidel tone, and with philosophic liberty, he manifestly thinks of Christianity with enmity,—nay, with spite. I will never believe that Kant was capable (as some have represented him) of ridiculing in conversation the hopes of immortality; for *that* is both incredible for itself, and in contradiction to many passages in his writings. But that he was mean and little-minded in his hatred to Christianity is certain. Nor is it at all unintelligible that, philosopher as he was, and compelled to do homage therefore, unwilling homage, to the purity and holiness which so transcendently belong to the Christian morals,—a subject which he could not decline or evade (having himself treated that part of philosophy with such emphatic truth and grandeur) after confessing, as in fact he did, its superiority to the Stoic morality, which certainly approaches nearest to the Christian in uncompromising rigour of principle,—it is still not unintelligible that he should harbour enmity to Christianity as an entire scheme of religious philosophy. Though at first sight startling, I repeat that this co-existence of two opposite states of feeling with regard to Christianity is no inexplicable phenomenon. Infidel philosophers have in general displayed a bigotry of hostility to Christianity which, whilst openly testifying their hatred, covertly testified their respect. In this there is really no marvel, though it is true that many writers have treated it as such. Humphrey Ditton, for instance, in his once celebrated book on the Resurrection,[1] addressing the infidels of his day, says (p. 42): "Why is there so loud a cry of juggle and imposture set up against Christianity, against which the charge has scarce ever been attempted to be made out, rather than the religion of Mohammed, where they grant the forgery to be past dispute? If there be a little fling sometimes by chance at the Koran, the critics are *always* exercising their wits upon the Gospel. Now, I say, why all this noise and stir about Christianity? Why Jesus Christ more than Mohammed?" The answer to this is not difficult upon philosophic grounds.

[1] Humphrey Ditton, mathematician and theologian, born 1675, died 1715. His *Discourse concerning the Resurrection of Jesus Christ* appeared in 1712, and was in its fifth edition in 1740.—M.

In any case whatever, let a man persuade himself that he has reasons for despising in one view what forces his homage in another, and a struggle will inevitably take place between the two opposite impulses, such as will always terminate in a lively state of anger and irritation. Absolute and unmitigated contempt will generally preclude hostility. That feeling will arise more naturally when the contempt is disturbed (and, therefore, from a quiescent raised to an active force) by a counter-agent, a sentiment of imperfect respect. On this principle is solved the cruelty practised on slaves by some men humane enough to brute animals. The inevitable respect for their own common nature in the person of the slave, meeting with their contempt for the individual, raised a conflict in their minds; but in the case of the brute, where the state of the feeling with which it is contemplated is not + X (or *plus X*) in opposition to − X (or *minus X*), but simply = O, no such conflict could arise.

The explanation, therefore, of Kant's hostility to Christianity was not at all the more difficult because, in many capital points, he venerated Christianity. On the contrary, it was on that account so much the easier. But, however that may be, the fact is undeniable. In one passage, though I cannot at this moment cite page and volume, he peremptorily denies that the moral or political condition of the earth, and the general face of society, have been at all improved by eighteen centuries of Christianity (more properly fifteen, regard had to the era of its civil establishment). But Kant's works yield many instances of unfair dealing with Christianity; one of which, as it will amuse you, I will here translate.—In the conclusion of his "*Streit der Facultaten*," Kant had remarked in the text that the Biblical History "presents us with a very remarkable "*Numeral Cabala*, in regard to the most important epochs "of its chronology, such as cannot but in some degree "weaken the impression of its authenticity." This remark he illustrates at length in the following footnote :—

"Seventy Apocalyptic months (of which there are 4 in this Cyclus), each month of 29½ years, make 2065 years. Now, from this product subtract every 49th year, as the great year of rest, or Sabbatical year, that is, subtract in all 42, and there remain exactly 2023 for the year

when Abraham went up to Egypt out of the land of Canaan, which God had given him. Thence to the recovery of that country by the children of Israel are precisely 70 Apocalyptic weeks = 490 years. Four periods of that length (= 1960 years) added to the former period of 2023 make 3983 years (the era of Christ's birth, dated from the Mosaical creation); and *that* so exactly that it is true even to a year. Seventy years after comes the final destruction of Jerusalem, and that also is a mystical epoch. But it may be objected that Bengel (in his *Ordo Temporum*, p. 9, and p. 218, seqq.) deduces a different number as the era of Christ's nativity. True: but that makes no manner of difference in the mystical sanctity of the number 7; for Bengel's number is 3939. Now, the number of years from Abraham's Call to the Birth of Christ is 1960; which number expresses the amount of four Apocalyptic periods, each of 490 years, or (if you choose) of 40 Apocalyptic periods, each of 7 times 7 years (49). Subtract, then, from every period of 49 years *one* as the representative of the Sabbatical year, that will give you 40 for a subtrahend; and next subtract, on account of every great Sabbatical year (namely, every 490th year), *one* also, and that will give you an additional subtrahend of 4, as there are four such periods of 490 years. Your total subtrahend, therefore, will be 44. This, taken from 3983, will leave Bengel's number of 3939 for the era of Christ's nativity. And thus it turns out that the two numbers 3983 and 3939, assigned on separate systems for the Birth of Christ, differ only thus far—that the latter of the two arises when, in computing the amount of time for the former, all that time which belongs to the four great epochs is reduced by the number of the Sabbatical years. According to Bengel's reckoning, the chronological table of the Sacred History would stand thus:—

2023—Promise to Abraham of the land of Canaan.
2502—Accomplishment of this promise.
2981—Dedication of the First Temple.
3460—Order for the building of the Second Temple.
3939—Birth of Christ.

Subtract from every one of these numbers the one immediately preceding, and it leaves 490 [? 479]. Even the year of the Flood may be learned on this system by *a priori* calculation. Four periods of 490 (that is of 70 times 7) make 1960. Subtract every 7th year (= 280), and there will remain 1680. From this 1680 again subtract every 70th year (= 24), and there will remain 1656; and that was the year of the Flood."

Upon all this long calculation Kant concludes thus:—

"What shall we say then? Is it to be inferred that the "sacred numbers have actually predetermined the course of "History? Frank's system, entitled *Cyclus Jobilæus*, turns "upon this very centre of mystical chronology."—By way of answer to it all, I think I cannot do better than transcribe

the words of Mr. Coleridge, as I once found them in a blank leaf of that volume which contains the Essay in question: —"In this attack on the New and Old Testament from "Cabala of Numbers, how came it that Kant did not perceive "that Jews could not join with Christians? And one of the "events, at least, is downright history, the destruction of "Jerusalem. A single perusal of Eichhorn (no believer "himself in the supernatural) dashes to earth all these "objections. Besides, how unfair to subtract every 49th "year in the first 2065 (= 2023), and not to subtract them "in the 70 times 4 Apocalyptic weeks that follow; to make "the Apocalyptic month 295 years, and then four Apoca-"lyptic weeks = 28! What coincidences may not be pro-"duced by these means? I doubt not you might fix on "some one number in the Greek or Roman history, and "play the same marvels off with it. Petavius may omit, "and Bengel introduce, the subtraction of the 49th year, "and all is fair; but Petavius must not now omit and now "introduce *ad libitum*. In short, the whole range is included "in 10; and what wonder if, with such licence allowed, "half a dozen remarkable events, in the course of 6000 "years, should be brought all to some one number? Every "man's own experience would furnish equal coincidences in "every year, if he examined minutely." True. Take an instance from the immortal Niebuhr. From Æneas to the building of Rome—how many years? 360. Thence to the capture by the Gauls? 360. Thence to the foundation of the Empire? 360. Thence to the foundation of Constantinople? 360. Was this Cabala? With respect to the Flood, Call of Abraham, Building of the First Temple, &c., these are all events that lie beyond the earliest limit of Grecian chronology, and therefore, of necessity, want all collateral evidence. Resting, therefore, upon purely Jewish testimony, it is open to an infidel to insinuate that events synchronizing so perfectly with a fanciful Rabbinical Cabala were themselves likely to be equally fanciful. But, when he goes on to apply the same principle of criticism to events authenticated by collateral records—Pagan as well as Christian, and Jewish, Greek, and Roman, no less than Hebrew — his scepticism recoils sadly on his own character for good sense. If a

monkish chronicler were to assure us that great famine or pestilence had occurred according to intervals indicated by the powers of the number 2 (viz. 4, 8, 16, 32, &c.), we should be disposed to laugh at his theory ; and, if we found him alleging confirmations of it from the dark ages, we should certainly suspect him of forging attestations so as to quadrate with his cabala. But, if this same monk were to show us that certain recurrences in our own actual experience had been governed by this law, in such a case, supposing that we still persisted in rejecting his theory, we must do so *in spite* of his illustrations, and not surely in consequence of them. Now, Kant's illustrations from the relations of time between the Crucifixion and the destruction of Jerusalem are brought forward as additional grounds of suspicion against Biblical testimony ; whereas evidently, so far as it goes, the tendency of this particular illustration is entirely in favour of the Cabala. Did Kant mean to question the Christian chronology of these events? If he did not, he meant something which tended against himself.

In the very same Essay, and in the very next page, is another instance of Kant's hatred to *pure* Christianity : if he would tolerate it in any shape, it seems it must be in that which is farthest removed from its primitive purity ; which, by the way, is an argument in favour of my way of accounting for Kant's feelings on this matter. Talking of the Roman Catholics, he says : " That Church, in avowing " that there is no salvation except within its own pale, " speaks much more consistently than the Protestant, which " admits the possibility of salvation even to the Roman " Catholic. For, if that be so, then (as Bossuet[1] observes) a " man will take the safest choice by attaching himself to the " Papists,—since, after all, to be happier than happy is what " no man need desire." It is scarcely possible, in the same number of words, to crowd more or heavier errors. Even

[1] Bossuet may have been the person who first gave this notion extensive currency ; and in that sense it may be properly attributed to him. Otherwise, it was used by Papists, and answered by Protestants, before Bossuet was born. See, among others, Archbishop Usher, Dr. Christopher Potter (of the age of James the First), and doubtless many scores beside. The root of the sophism came from Arnobius.

the last words have no truth; since a Protestant may, very consistently with Scripture, believe in *degrees* of future happiness. But the great blunder, and one which possibly never was surpassed by any man priding himself (and justly for the most part) upon accuracy of logic, is in the application of Bossuet's remark. For it is obvious that, if a man already believes in the Popish creed, then he has no choice to make. To suppose him in a state of freedom for making a choice, we must necessarily suppose him an unbeliever in that form of religion. If, then, being an unbeliever, he yet adopts it on politic considerations of safety (as having the votes in his favour both of Papist and Protestant), *that* is no religion at all, either in the eyes of Papist or Protestant, for both must include sincerity in their idea of religion. Obviously, the maxim is of no prudential application at all; that is, it does not beforehand serve to guide a man in his choice of religion: its use is merely reflex or retrospective; that is, supposing a man, in sincerity of heart, to have *bona fide* adopted the Popish faith as his own, such a maxim is consolatory afterwards and on reflection, by suggesting the double guarantee which he has for having made a wise choice,—first, in the assurance of his own Church, and, secondly, in the admission of the hostile Church. That a logician so keen as Kant should have committed so monstrous an oversight, and allowed his spite to betray him into such an Irish Bull as that of making a man to be prudentially religious in professing a religion which he does not believe, has certainly no parallel. Here again I found a note of Mr. Coleridge's in these words:—"It may well surprise one to "find in Kant a confirmation of so ridiculous a sophism as that "of Bossuet and the Romanists. The Protestant does not "say that a man can be saved who chooses the Catholic "religion, not as true, but as the safest; for this is no religion "at all, but only a pretence to it. A faith sincere, from "honest intentions, will save Catholic or Protestant. So St. "Paul on meats and holy days." But the best, most triumphant, and most comprehensive answer which this monstrous abortion of sound logic ever met with was from the pen of Jeremy Taylor. Never, perhaps, on any subject, were there two such annihilating arguments on this point as

these which follow. First, on the supposition (a very possible one) that we Protestants are *wrong* in our concession,—"Whatever we talk, things are *as they are*, not as we dispute, "or grant, or hope"; and hence he reminds a convert to Popery, whom he is here addressing, that it would be no great consolation to her, in the unfortunate case of finding herself damned, that we Protestants had, in our charity, believed the contrary. But, secondly, on the supposition that we are *right* in our concession, what is the true meaning and value of that concession? It may safely be affirmed that, had Bossuet or any other Papist ever read the clencher which follows, we should never again have heard this Protestant concession insisted on:—"I wish," says Jeremy Taylor, "I "wish that you would consider that, if any of our men say "salvation may be had in your Church, it is not for the "goodness of your new proposition" (*i.e.* for the additions or changes interwoven with Protestantism or Primitive Christianity), "but only because you do keep so much of that "which is our religion that upon the confidence of THAT we "hope well concerning you. And we do not hope anything "at all that is good of you or your religion as it *distinguishes* "from us and ours: we hope that the good which you have "*common* with us may obtain pardon, directly or indirectly, "or may be an antidote of the venom, and an amulet against "the danger, of your very great errors. So that, if you can "derive any confidence from our concession, you must "remember where it takes root,—not upon anything of "yours, but wholly upon the excellence of ours. You are "not at all safe or warranted for being Papists; but we hope "well of some of you for having so much of the Protestant." Other arguments follow and precede this, in which Jeremy Taylor has pursued the sophism with such overwhelming ridicule, and so merciless an exposure of its hollowness, to the very end of his letter (a letter to an English lady who had been recently seduced to Popery), that, laying all together, one is perfectly astounded to find that any one single proposition can be comprehensive enough to cover such a variety and enormity of error. And, had Kant been induced to read this flagrant exposure of the true Protestant sense of the famous Protestant concession, which he had backed with his

imprimatur under the Popish acceptation of it, he was too good a dialectician not to have blushed purple for his own levity and thoughtless precipitance.[1]

Writing with such habitual contempt for revealed religion, and with more bitter contempt in proportion as that religion came nearer to the ideal of absolute purity, Kant (as it may well be supposed) could not fail of drawing upon himself the notice of government. With all our modern outcry for toleration, it may be hoped that a time will never come, in any Christian land, when a public professor in a great national university, authorised and protected by the government,—a professor, too, whose extraordinary talents and knowledge diffused his opinions far and wide, and whose otherwise irreproachable life gave them additional weight and influence,—can have reason to count upon toleration in sapping the very foundations of those doctrines upon which all the sublimer hopes of poor frail humanity repose. Such a time, we trust, will never come, even in the heart of infidel Germany. At all events, it *had* not come in the 18th century. And, accordingly, on the 12th of October 1794, Kant was surprised by an unwelcome letter of stern rebuke from his sovereign, the reigning king of Prussia, Frederick William the Second. The immediate occasion of this letter

[1] Kant was eternally using, in his own writings, the scholastic distinction of *objective* and *subjective*; and, I readily grant, not without good reason, and great benefit. Strange that he did not see how much that distinction applies to this case! The Romanists talk as though our concession, opposed to their absolute refusal of a corresponding concession, argued something *objectively* superior and more convincing in their faith; but evidently, and *before examination even*, it might be presumed quite as likely to argue only a *subjective* difference in the two parties, viz. in charity. Not any more dubious appearance of error on their part, but on ours greater charity as to the pardonableness of all error that is merely error of the understanding, extorts from us such a concession. On this view of the case, it is clear that greater impudence and greater uncharitableness will always be sufficient to secure the imaginary triumph of the Papist, or indeed of any other partizans in any other cause. A Cartesian might say to a Newtonian, "I presume you do not think me in damnable error?" "Certainly not," replies the Newtonian. "Then take notice," rejoins the Cartesian, "that your errors in my mind *are* damnable." Upon this argument, according to Kant, a man would do well to abjure his Newtonianism.

was his book on *Religion within the limits of pure Reason*: but it is probable that this particular book did but mature and furnish the immediate *occasion* to the explosion of that displeasure which must have been long accumulating. The thunder fell with the more effect upon the old Transcendentalist for a very particular and facetious reason, viz. because he considered himself (*risum teneatis!*) a remarkably religious character. In one thing the old man's feelings were spared: the letter was a private one, and first made public by Kant himself after the king's death. As it is short and to the purpose, perhaps I may as well translate it.

"Frederick William, by the grace of God King of Prussia, &c. &c. To our well-beloved Immanuel Kant:—Worthy and very learned Professor, our dear liegeman! So it is that for some time past it has come to our high knowledge, with great displeasure, that you misapply your philosophy to the purpose of disfiguring and disparaging many capital and fundamental doctrines of Holy Writ and Christianity; as particularly in your book entitled *Religion within the limits of pure Reason*, and in other similar Essays. We had looked for better things from you; since you cannot but yourself be aware how deeply you offend, by such conduct, against your own duty as a teacher of youth, and against the spirit of our paternal wishes—to which you were no stranger—for the welfare of the country. We look for your conscientious answer as soon as possible; and expect, on pain of our highest displeasure, that you will give no ground for blame of that sort in future, but will rather apply your influence and your great talents to the task of furthering more and more our gracious designs for the public good. Otherwise, in case of persevering opposition to our pleasure hereby notified, be well assured that you will have unpleasant consequences to expect. Meantime we assure you of our gracious regard.—Berlin, the 1st of October 1794."

Such was the rebuke, such were the menaces, which, in hoary old age (then upwards of 70), Kant drew upon himself from his king,—a prince otherwise so well disposed to him that nothing less than the highest provocation could have extorted from him a harsh word to a man in other respects of merit so distinguished. But surely grey hairs and irreligion make a monstrous union; and the spirit of proselytism carried into the service of infidelity, a youthful zeal put forth by a tottering decrepit old man to withdraw from poor desponding and suffering human nature its most essential props, whether for action or for suffering, for conscience or for hope, is a

spectacle too disgusting to leave room for much sympathy with merit of another kind. What was Kant's reply? It has often been observed that, when once a man gets deeply involved in debt, he is rarely able to preserve his integrity or his honour quite unsullied, or at least loses the edge of his aversion to petty meanness. Something of the same effect is visible in the conduct of those who allow themselves openly to propagate infidelity. Let a man be as sincerely an infidel as any ever *has* been, it is most difficult to suppose that he can have framed to himself any notions of moral obligation which could make it a duty to extend his opinions. So that it is a thousand to one that, in publishing his opinions, he has yielded almost consciously to a vanity or to a spite which he is ashamed to avow. Hence arises a necessity for lying. And melancholy it is to record that Kant,—the upright, stern, stoical Kant,—in his answer to the king, shuffled, juggled, equivocated, in fact (it must be avowed) *lied*. To what an extravagant height Kant carried his general reverence for truth is well known. So sacred, in his estimate, was the obligation to unconditional veracity that he declared it to be a duty, in case a murderer should apply to you for information as to the route taken by a man who had just escaped from his murderous fangs, to tell him the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Not to save a poor innocent fellow-creature from instant and bloody death, not even to save the assassin from the guilt and misery of so hideous a crime, would it be lawful, in Kant's judgment, to practise any the slightest evasion or disguise. The right to truth even of the most abhorred matricide, and in the very act and agony of accomplishing his hellish purposes, is, according to Kant, absolute, and incapable of restraint or qualification. This explanation it was necessary to make, that we may be able to appreciate properly the miserable dilemma in which Kant must have involved himself before he would seek shelter from a king's displeasure in a palpable untruth. But such it was, a lie gross and palpable, on which this proud philosopher mainly rested his apology. His letter to the King of Prussia is a perfect model of all that a letter to a king ought — *not* to be: long, wordy, perplexed, miserably pedantic, and, by its tortuous involution in some

passages (if *that* were not the ordinary character of Kant's style), one might think expressly designed to mystify the king and throw dust in his eyes. The substance is this:— After rehearsing the words of the king's charges he says that, as "a teacher of youth," *i.e.* in his character of public lecturer, he could not by possibility have committed the offence imputed to him, since he had always taken as the text-book for his lectures a well-known work in which no mention of the Scriptures or of Christianity had occurred, or could occur, viz. Baumgarten's Metaphysics. But might he not have wandered from his text? No: *that* was a fault which no man could tax him with. Having set his face through life against the popular error of confounding the limits of different sciences, could it be supposed that he would himself trespass in that way? Thus far, certainly, Kant said no more than the truth. But now hear what followed. As to his work on religion, *that* was to be considered as a sealed book, never meant for the public at large, or what we may call the *lay* public, but addressed *ad clerum*, *i.e.* to the learned and professional public. Shameless falsehood! to say this of a book which is no otherwise an unpopular book than as it became such by the heavy, rude, and cumbrous style in which it is written, bristling with scholastic distinctions, and disfigured by hyper-composite terms of art. Such a style might have a good deal to repel; but was there nothing *ex adverso* in the wide-spread fame of the author, and the curiosity connected with his philosophy, that might avail as a counterweight to that objection? And will Kant pretend to tell us that it was in any man's power, writing rationally and with simplicity on a subject of such diffusive interest in religion, so to conceal his meaning as that it should not be penetrated by all people of education with a tolerably good understanding? He had not so much as interposed the thin veil of Latin betwixt himself and the public. Such a veil, it is true, lasts only for a moment, as translators in abundance are always at hand for a book of any interest; but at least there is a homage to decorum in assuming that disguise. Perhaps, however, you may think that an acquaintance with the Transcendental Philosophy was a *conditio sine qua non* for understanding the book. By no means. It was

absolutely independent of that and of every philosophical system. And, had Kant spoken the naked truth, he would have said: It is most true that I have done the worst of what your Majesty imputes to me, and even worse; but, however, my book is written in such a disgusting style, very much resembling that of my present letter, that I am inclined to think very few people will read twenty pages without finding it act upon them as an emetic; on which account it may be considered as a book not written, or self-cancelled." The practical result of the matter was that Kant promised to offend in this way no more. But even here he practised a jesuitical reserve; for, in the last sentence of his letter, which made this promise in the most solemn (and to an unsuspecting reader in the most unreserved) terms, he prepared an excuse for a future evasion of his promise by introducing the words "as your Majesty's most faithful subject"; which words, he tells us in a note, were secretly meant by himself as limiting his engagement to the term of the king's life; though the words neither pointedly express that limitation, nor were at all designed by Kant to be interpreted by the king in any such sense. This is not quite the good faith and plain dealing of a man of honour.

But enough of this. Another essay of Kant's, which I shall notice, is one which bears the following title—"*On the common saying, that such or such a thing may be true in theory, but does not hold good in practice.*"[1] In this essay the

[1] The idea of a *theory*, as it differs from that of a *hypothesis*, is much in need of rectification. Most writers use the terms indiscriminately, and with no sense of any precise difference; and others, who have such a sense, have it so vaguely developed as to fancy that the word *hypothesis* means a theory in a state of immaturity, or so long as it is *sub judice* and undemonstrated. But the distinction turns upon quite another hinge. The Grecian etymology, in fact, points in each case to the true meaning. Imagine, in any science or speculation, that all the elements (*i.e.* the forces, the modes of action, the phenomena, &c.) are given, but as yet they exist to the mind as an unorganized chaos. Then steps in contemplation, or reflective survey (Θεωρία), to assign to them all their several places or relations: which shall be first, which middle, which last; which shall be end, which shall be means; which subordinate, which co-ordinate; which force is for impulse, which for regulation; which absolute, which conditional; which purpose direct, which indirect or collateral; and so on. This introduction of organization amongst the facts or data of science is

primary purpose of Kant (or that which is ostensibly primary) is the correction of a vulgar error, which is all but universal, viz. the notion of a possible want of harmony (or even a possible irreconcilability) between the laws of theory and the facts of experience; as if it were possible, or even common, that the first should teach us to expect what the other might refuse to ratify. No notion can be more erroneous, or, indeed, upon a proper definition of the word *theory*, more self-contradictory. For theory is, in fact, no more than a system of laws, abstracted from experience: consequently, if any apparent contradiction should exist between them, this could only argue that the theory had been falsely or imperfectly abstracted; in which case the sensible inference would be, not a summons to forgo theories, but a call for better and more enlarged theories. There is, however, a sense of this popular saying under which, though the

Theory. A theory, therefore, may be defined—an organic development to the understanding of the relations between the parts of any systematic whole. But in a hypothesis it is only one relation which is investigated, viz. that of dependency. A number of phenomena are given, and perhaps with no want of orderly relation amongst them; but as yet they exist without apparent basis or support. The question, therefore, is concerning a sufficient ground or cause to account for them. I therefore step in and *underlay* the phenomena with a substructure or *sub-position* (Ὑποθεσις) such as I think capable of supporting them. This is a hypothesis. Briefly, then, in a theory I organize what is certain enough already, but undetermined in its relations; whereas in a hypothesis I assign the causality when previously it was either unknown or uncertain. For example, we talk properly of a *theory of combustion*; for the elements, *i.e.* the phenomena and results, are indeterminate only with regard to their reciprocal relations. But, with regard to the *aurora borealis*, it is a hypothesis that we want in the first place, for the phenomena are of uncertain origin. And perhaps this hypothesis would demand, as its sequel, a theory of the whole agencies concerned; but this could not be until the causality should have been determined. Again, suppose the case of algebraical equations. Here all possibility of hypothesis is excluded. But a theory is still wanted. Many theories have started from the genesis of equations first proposed by Harriot, viz. that which views the higher equations as generated by multiplication out of the lower. But perhaps a different view of their origin would lead to more comprehensive results. Hindenburg with his disciples, Stahl, &c., have most happily applied an approved theory of combinations to this subject. I conclude with this recapitulation:—Theory is = Ordination; Hypothesis is = Substration.

expression is inaccurate, it is very true and very extensively applicable. In one passage Kant seems to allude to such a sense, though he has not sufficiently illustrated his meaning. But, waiving this, it is very certain that the ordinary application of the saying labours with the whole error charged upon it; and this is stated by Kant as follows. Having first shown the futility of pretending to practical skill in disconnexion from a knowledge of theory, he says :—

"Meantime it is far more tolerable that an unlearned person should represent theory as superfluous for the purposes of his imaginary practice (though not questioning their harmony) than that a shallow refiner, whilst conceding the value of theory for speculation and scholastic uses, should couple with this concession the doctrine that in practice the case is otherwise, and that, upon coming out of the schools into the world, a man will be made sensible of having pursued mere philosophic dreams,—in short, that what sounds well in theory is not merely superfluous, but absolutely false, for practice. Now, the practical engineer who should express himself in these terms upon the science of mechanics, or the artillery officer who should say of the doctrine of projectiles that the theory of it was conceived indeed with great subtlety, but was of little practical value, because in the actual exercise of the art it was found that the experimental results did not conform to the theory, would expose themselves to derision. For, supposing that in the first case should be superadded to the theory of mechanics that of friction, and that in the second to the theory of projectiles were superadded that of the resistance of the air,—which in effect amounts to this, that if, instead of rejecting theory, still more theory were added,—in that case the results of the abstract doctrine and of the experimental practice would coincide in every respect.

"However, it cannot be denied that a theory such as this I have just mentioned, which has reference to objects of sense, is very differently circumstanced from a theory which has reference to mere ideas : a theory, for instance, which is employed upon mathematical objects (*i.e.* upon the determinations of space, which admit of a sensuous construction) differs much from one which is employed upon philosophic objects (*i.e.* upon notions which admit of no such construction). Hence it should seem, *prima facie*, not impossible that these last objects may be very accurately conceived and pursued into a theory, whilst yet, at the same time, they should be incapable of being *given* (to use the technical term), *i.e.* not capable of being realized in actual experience : in other words, the conceptions, and the theory built upon them, might be alike *ideas* in the true Platonic sense,—that is, transcendent to all experimental exhibition, and susceptible of no practical application, or even of a very injurious one.

"*Prima facie*, I say, in these cases, it seems not impossible that such a want of correspondence might be found between practice and

theory. Whether it really *would* be found is another question. But, waiving this question as a general one, let me confine myself throughout the present essay to one particular case of this question, viz. that in which the theory should happen to be built upon the idea of *duty*. Now, in this case, I affirm, and shall undertake to prove, that all fear lest the theory should prove inapplicable in practice, on account of the idea on which it reposes, is utterly groundless. This is demonstrable; no theoretic demand of duty can by possibility be impracticable. Why? Because it never could be a duty to propose any such result as an object of legitimate desire, if it were not capable of being realized in experience—whether now and perfectly, or by approximation. This is the sort of theory which I shall treat in the present essay. For of this it is, to the scandal of all philosophy, that we hear it not seldom alleged that what is abstractly right in it yet cannot be made available for practice: and *that*, too, in a conceited tone, full of presumptuous pretensions for correcting the reason (and correcting it, observe, in that very point which constitutes its most glorious distinction) by experience; under the vainglorious fancy of seeing farther and more surely by means of mole eyes fastened upon the earth than with eyes fitted to a being that was framed to stand upright and fix his gaze upon the heavens.

"In our days, so rich in words but poor in deeds, this very popular maxim (of the discord between theory and practice), as often as it happens to be applied to any question of duty, whether it be a duty in that mode of obligation which is called ethical, or in that which is called juridical, is sure to be the parent of the very greatest evil. On this account I shall state the relation of theory and practice in three articles or sections: *first*, as it respects moral obligation in general, with a view to the welfare of every man indifferently, taken individually; *secondly*, as it respects juristic or political obligation, with a view to the welfare of states; *thirdly*, as it respects cosmopolitical obligation, with a view to the welfare of the human species as a whole."

Such is an outline of the introduction. From the body of the essay, as the parts of it are separately intelligible, and, indeed, quite independent, I shall select the *second* section; because this treats a question of politics in a high degree interesting to ourselves, not only as having often been discussed through the two last centuries, and by very celebrated writers of our own, but also as being now of real historical importance in determining the merits of our ancestors at the great epoch of our Revolution. The question I mean respects the right of subjects to resist, in case of fundamental violation of the contract (implicit contract) between themselves and the supreme power. The origin and the limits of this right might still give room to much

metaphysical casuistry. But it must excite the burning indignation of Englishmen to find Kant roundly and broadly denying the existence of any such right in the uttermost extremity ; and that, too, with a special regard to the particular case of England ; yet with all that ignorance of the facts which we might look for in a man who (as I have said before) never read anything at all.

I know not how others think upon this matter, under a point of view which I am now going to suggest. I know not how you think, most excellent Sir Kit ; but, for my part, I am stung with scorn when I consider in what manner, and by what authorities, the capital questions which arise upon the rights of great nations have been adjudicated. A *littérateur* of no very masculine intellect,—Hugh Groot (or Grotius), or suppose Puffendorf,[1] (who certainly had as poor an understanding as any creature that ever lived),—simply upon the strength of a little Latin and Greek, which also neither of them (not Groot even) had in any perfection,—inconsiderable knaves like these, whom no man would allow to interfere in the most trivial domestic dispute, take upon them to lay down the law in the most peremptory manner for the weightiest concerns of mighty nations, on which are suspended, perhaps, the happiness and dignity of countless generations. Their arbitration would not be valid for a contested claim to the tail of a herring ; and yet, from the imbecility of men, who will catch at any opinion which countenances *their* side in a quarrel, nations themselves will accredit and give weight to judgments which else are lighter than vanity. But perhaps Grotius &c. rest their doctrines upon their intrinsic force, upon their coherence with each other, and their logical dependency from a sufficient original ground. By no means. All is blank dogmatism ; mere autocratic bulls, ukases, or rescripts ; a continual *stet pro ratione voluntas.* Forth steps Barclay, a toad-eating slave,

[1] Hugo Grotius, Dutchman, born 1583, died 1645 ; Samuel Puffendorf, German, born 1632, died 1694. De Quincey's estimate here of these two famous scholars and jurists is outrageously below the mark of their generally acknowledged merits. The *De Jure Belli et Pacis* of Grotius was published in 1625 ; the *De Jure Naturæ et Gentium* of Puffendorf in 1672.—M.

one who practised adulation to kings, in the original sense of that word as a *slavish* homage (δουλεια),—that is, with Phrygian cringes and genuflexions: well, what says Barclaius?[1] I allow, says he, of resistance in cases of hopeless extremity. Be it so; but now, tell us, hound! which be they? Why, these:—For instance, first, if a king should commit enormous cruelties. Here note the abject understanding of the animal. Cruelties could never, in a populous nation, be an anti-national crime; they could bear no proportion co-extensive with the nation; they would constitute an offence against individuals. And the inviolability of the kingly character in its relations to individuals is a doctrine not merely of the free British constitution, but one which is found more or less developed in all refined countries; and, as civilisation is matured, it will become universal. So that this sycophant destroys the sanctity of the regal character in the very point in which the warmest friends of popular rights must allow it. Then, again, what baseness to erect a privileged case for the sufferer in mere animal interests which is denied to every possible mode or degree of damage or peril as to interests which the same being can have as a moral and intellectual creature! So that the inference is—if the social compact is liable to dissolution on this single ground—that the paramount purpose of society is to protect a man's carcase. What says Groot to all this? Why, Groot nods approvingly. So much, then, is settled: hear it, ye nations, and obey! But is this all? No; yet another boon will Barclaius confer upon the nations of this planet. I allow one other case, saith he; and *that* is, when a king is taking measures to sell his people to a foreign prince; in such a case, be it understood that I, Barclaius, by these presents, allow of that people's resisting the conveyance. Now for Groot: doth Groot nod as before? No. Groot reclaims. This, saith he, is what I shall never

[1] William Barclay or Barclaius, a Scotsman, born 1546, emigrated to France in 1571, and became distinguished there as a civilian. He died 1605. His son, by a French wife, was the more celebrated John Barclay (1582-1621), author of the Latin political romance called *Argenis*. It must be to the father that De Quincey refers, and more particularly to his *De Regno et Regali Potestate: adversus Buchananum et reliquos Monarchomachos*, published at Paris in 1600.—M.

allow of in that unlimited shape. No; I require proof, absolute proof, of signing, sealing, and delivery of the article. So Groot's concession amounts to this—that, supposing King John had so far accomplished his celebrated treaty with a Moorish prince as that all England had found itself chained at Tangier or Mequinez, in that case all England had Groot's gracious permission to commence resistance. I, Sir Christopher, as well you know, am no admirer of brutal punishments; in particular, the very word *knouting* is abominable to mine, as it is to all refined ears. Yet, as even Barclay and Grotius allow of resistance in cases which they conceive to be desperate, so even I would unwillingly concede the use of the *knout* in cases unsusceptible of other remedies, and upon subjects insensible to other arguments. To some people the only appropriate style of reasoning is by kicking them. *A posteriori* arguments are alone intelligible to their perverse senses. And I must confess that it strikes me as far below the majesty of the subject that any apologist for great historical passages, and for nations who were the actors in them, should permit himself or the clients whom he has adopted to be cited to the bar of a low Dutch rascal, self-constituted a judge, and raised into an authority merely by force of his own coxcombry and self-sufficiency.[1] The time for knouting Barclay or Puffendorf is past. That *was* the proper answer. Being now impossible, let us have none at all.

The same feeling—the same unwilling side-glance at the

[1] Grotius is one of those names which time is rapidly reducing to its just level. Two centuries ago—that is to say, soon after the publication of his *De Jure Belli et Pacis* (in the summer of 1625)—his name was unquestionably the highest literary name in Europe. More extravagant encomiums might be alleged from Lord Bacon, Thuanus, &c., in regard to him than any modern writer. (See, in particular, a passage in Bishop Burnet's speech in the House of Lords on Dr. Sacheverell's case.) But since then he has been wofully cut down. His edition of the Greek Dramatic Fragments, under the keen examination of exquisite modern scholars, has amply exposed his imperfect scholarship. In his work on the Evidences of Christianity, every way an attorney-like piece of special pleading, his ridiculous fable of Mahomet's Dove, which Pococke denounced, would have furnished the Mahometans with a standing handle against Christendom, had it not been omitted in the Arabic translation. [See *ante*, Vol. III, pp.

knout as the appropriate instrument of reply—must come over everybody, friend or foe, who reads Kant's attack on the English nation for their political Revolution of 1688-9. A great people solemnly effect a change in the government (no matter whether, by introducing the doctrine of an abdication on the part of James, they were merely passive in the first step of the affair, since, upon any theory, they were undoubtedly active in the latter steps): this people consecrate that event in their annals, and deduce their prosperity from that date. Forth stalks a transcendental pedant, and addresses them thus:—"You think yourselves very clever fellows in all this affair, and strut about Europe like so many peacocks on the score of your imaginary merits; and you value yourselves much on the public prosperity you ascribe to this event. But, as to the results of it, take notice that if, in fact, you *have* prospered, yet, in good logic, you ought *not* to have prospered. And, as to the event itself, apart from its results, just step into my closet, and I shall show you, in one volume octavo, that such conduct as yours merited capital punishment."

"The Consul quoted Wickefort,
And Puffendorf, and Grotius,
And proved from Vattell
Exceedingly well
Such a deed must be quite atrocious."

So says the excellent ballad; but what came of the Consul? Why, the barbarous Dey—he "strangled him in his prat-

260-2.—M.] His *Annals* are without historical merit. And his main work, *De Jure*, has kept its ground chiefly by means of its early possession of the ear of Europe, and also, in a considerable degree, by means of the little scraps of Latin and Greek with which, in contempt of all good composition, it is tessellated: these, being generally short, are of the proper compass for poor scholars; weak birds must try their wings in short flights. Take away the Greek and Latin seasoning, which (in conjunction with the laconic style) has kept the book from putrefying, all the rest is pretty equally divided between empty truisms, on one hand, and time-serving Dutch falsehoods, on the other. Had the book been really the powerful one it has been represented, it would have intercepted the extravagancies of Hobbes, which commenced thirty years after. Well and truly did Grotius, when dying, lament that he had consumed a life in levities and strenuous inanities.

ing." And what some would think even a worse fate has, in this instance, befallen poor Mr. Kant. For that which he designed as the most alarming insult to a great nation, and which was for ever to throw a taint upon a capital point in their historical pretensions,—in fact, what was put forth as a withering annihilation of British pride as connected with the Revolution of 1688-9,—has not yet, fifty years after it was published, been so much as heard of by those at whom it was aimed. I, for the first time, apprehending no mortification to our national pretensions in this great event, shall give the whole of what he says, without bestowing one syllable of reply upon it. So infinitely has England the start of all other nations in political knowledge that even at this moment in France (where, however, they are far ahead of the Germans) a great authority, M. Cottu, is constrained to admit of his countrymen that they are not yet "ripe" for discussions on civil liberty; and, as to German philosophers, whosoever will look back to the full report of Dr. Sacheverell's trial in Queen Anne's time (which said Dr. Sacheverell, by the way, was called over the coals for pretty much the same opinions as are here advanced, with much less caution and good sense, by Kant) may there find an ample refutation of every notion here brought forward in almost every page of the speeches delivered by the managers of the case on the part of the House of Commons. So general was the diffusion of light even at that time in England; so total the darkness almost a century later upon the same topic among the illuminati in the "haughty schools" of philosophic Germany! But now let Mr. Kant be heard:—

"Hence it follows that all resistance to the supreme legislative power, all rebellion for the purpose of giving effect to the discontents of the subject, is the highest and most punishable crime in any form of civil polity, inasmuch as it destroys the fundamental props of that polity. And this prohibition of resistance is unconditional; so that, for instance, if the legislative power, or its agent, the supreme governor, may even have violated the original contract, and thereby, in the opinion of the subject, have forfeited the legislative function,—still, even in that case, all right of resistance continues equally forbidden to the subject. The reason is because, during the subsistence of a civil constitution, the people can rightfully be entitled to no co-permanent voice in determining how, or by what rules, that legislative power shall be administered. For, suppose the case, that the people had such a

voice, and that the judgment delivered by this popular voice were in opposition to the judgment of the existing supreme governor, who, I ask, is to decide with which side lies the truth? Manifestly neither side can do this, as judge in his own case. Consequently there would arise a necessity for a supreme head of the state, paramount to the supreme head, who might be thus authorised to decide between the actual supreme head and the people; which, however, is clearly a contradiction. Furthermore, I affirm that no right of desperate extremity (*jus in casu necessitatis*)—which, besides, as a supposed right to violate acknowledged rights, in a case of extreme[1] physical necessity, is otherwise a nonentity in philosophical distinctions—can have any admission here, or can ever unlock that barrier which puts restraint upon the people. For the head of the state may just as well justify his severe measures against the subjects by their contumacious resistance as they their seditious movements by his tyranny. Who then is to decide? Doubtless, he that finds himself in possession of the supreme administration of the law; and that is precisely the head of

---

[1] "There is no such thing in morals as a *casus necessitatis*, except in one situation, viz. in a collision between *unconditional* duties on the one side, and, on the other side, duties which, though great, are yet *conditional*; as, for example, suppose an impossibility of averting a calamity from a state except by betraying an individual that should stand in some near relation to oneself—that of father, perhaps, or of son. Now, in this case the duty to the state is unconditional; but the duty to the individual is purely conditional; viz. subject to the condition that he shall be free of all criminal acts or designs towards the state. The denunciation, therefore, which a man might make to the magistracy of criminal enterprises on the part of an individual so circumstanced, though made under the heaviest shock of pain and violence to private feelings, would yet be made under an absolute compulsion—viz. a moral compulsion. But, in another case,—when it is affirmed of one who pushes a fellow-sufferer in a shipwreck from his plank for the purpose of saving his own life that he had acquired a right to this act by a case of necessity (viz. physical necessity)—this, I take leave to say, is utterly false. For the duty of self-preservation is a mere conditional duty (that is, subject to the condition that it shall be accomplished without guilt); but, on the other hand, to forbear taking away the life of another, who is not offering me any injury,—nay, who is not the author of that situation which puts me into any risk of losing my own life,—this is an unconditional duty. However, the teachers of general municipal law proceed quite consistently with the privilege which they concede to this self-consideration in a case of desperate necessity. For, obviously, if it were prohibited, the supreme magistrate could not connect any penalty with the prohibition, inasmuch as this penalty could be no other than death. Now, it would be an absurd law that should threaten a man with death for not voluntarily resigning himself to death in circumstances of danger."—*Note by Kant.*

the state: he only has the right of decision; and no member of the body politic can have a title to dispute this possession with him.

"Notwithstanding all this, I find respectable authorities who take upon themselves to stand up for the right of the subject to a counter-power of resisting under particular circumstances. Amongst these authorities I shall here cite only one, viz. the very cautious, precise, and discreet Achenwall. This writer, in his *Jus Naturæ* (5th Edit. Pars Poster. sec. 203-206), delivers himself thus:—'If the danger which menaces the state from a longer toleration of the injustice exercised by the supreme magistrate be greater than that which there is reason to apprehend from taking up arms against him, in that case the people are at liberty to resist him, in maintenance of this liberty are entitled to disengage themselves from their contract of allegiance, and are free to depose him as a tyrant'; and he concludes 'that in this way the people must be held, with reference to their former governor, to have reverted to the state of nature.'

"I readily persuade myself that neither Achenwall nor any other of those worthy[1] men who have been led into agreement with him upon this point by metaphysical refinements would in any case of actual occurrence have counselled or even have sanctioned such perilous experiments[2]; and, further, it is hardly to be doubted that, had those

---

[1] Here is another instance of Kant's want of reading. He speaks of Achenwall, and some nameless writers, whom he calls, contemptuously, "worthy men." But he ought to have known that Locke, Barbeyrac, Noodt, Burlamaqui, and *all* the writers on this subject of any celebrity since the era of Locke, take the same course as his own "worthies," but generally with much more decision and plain-speaking.

[2] How deplorably weak is this remark! For, suppose that Achenwall, in the circumstances stated, would act as Mr. Kant here chooses most arbitrarily to assume, what would *that* prove but that a particular individual was a bolder man upon paper than under the trials of real life and of immediate danger? A very supposable thing, and which might, or might not, happen to be the result if Mr. Achenwall were summoned to such a test; but, in any case, that result could illustrate nothing but Mr. Achenwall's character or temperament—a matter surely very impertinent to the question before us. Manifestly, it could in no degree affect the doctrine under discussion. Let Mr. Achenwall behave in what way he might, we should always be entitled to reduce the whole affair to this simple dilemma:—The case imagined and stated by Achenwall either is, or is not, realized: if it is *not*, then it is impertinent and puerile to talk about it. On the other hand, if it *is*, then we know what is the conscientious decision of Achenwall,—what, as a matter of duty, he would both "sanction," and "counsel," and *do*, far better and more unequivocally from his book, where he speaks under no possible bias from promises on the one side or terrors on the other, than we could ever do from his actual conduct in circumstances which might probably lay him under disturbing influences from both.

popular movements by means of which Switzerland, the United Netherlands, or even Great Britain, succeeded in extorting their present constitutions, upon which they set so high a value, come to a less fortunate issue, the readers of those histories would have seen, in the capital punishment of the several leaders in those revolutions, all honoured as they now are, nothing more or less than the well-merited punishments of great state criminals. For, generally, the final issue mingles in our judgment upon the rightfulness of actions, notwithstanding that the first can never be certain, nor the last ever doubtful. It is, however, evident, in what regards the latter, that, even if no wrong were done to the sovereign (as possibly having himself previously violated his compact with the people), yet the people would, by this mode of seeking its rights, commit the very rankest injustice, as thus making all rightful constitution of a state impossible, and introducing a state of entire lawlessness (*status naturalis*), in which all right ceases, or at least ceases for effectual existence.

"This theory, in fact, we see sufficiently confirmed in practice. In the constitution of Great Britain, which that nation parades with such prodigious ostentation, as though it were a constitution for the whole world, we find that it is wholly silent about the rights which belong to the people in case the monarch should violate the contract of 1688; consequently,[1] it is clear that the English constitution secretly reserves the privilege of rebellion against the king, in the case of his designing to violate it, inasmuch as no law exists upon the subject. For, to suppose that the constitution should contain a law for this case, justifying the overthrow of that subsisting form of government from which all special laws emanate, even assuming that the contract *were* violated by the king,—this is a self-evident contradiction; because in that case it would involve a direct counterforce, publicly constituted; consequently, there must be a second head of the state for the protection of the popular rights, and after that a third, to arbitrate between the two first. Accordingly, we see that the leaders of the people at that crisis (or, if you will, the guardians of the people), apprehensive of some such accusation in the event of their enterprise failing, chose rather to palm upon the king (whom, in fact, they had panic-stricken into flight) an act of voluntary abdication than to claim the right of

---

What sense in appealing from that which could not be other than a sincere decision to one which, if different at all, must differ by being insincere?

[1] Few people, it is to be hoped, out of Germany, or rather the cloisters of German universities, will see much logical *consequence* in this "consequently"; *i.e.*, because the English constitution does not openly provide for rebellion, it must secretly reserve such a right! Had Kant, instead of speculating on this subject, *read* a little of such works as we English allow for faithful expounders of our constitution, he would not have needed to romance in this way. But, as usual, he read nothing.

deposing him,—a claim by which they would have placed the constitution in open and undisguised contradiction with itself."[1]

After this you will smile, Sir Christopher, to hear that Kant passes,—first stopping, with infinite complacency, to compliment himself as a man whom, assuredly, nobody would ever think of charging with adulation to kings, or too indulgent a spirit to their rights,—he passes, I say, to undertake the defence of popular rights against Hobbes. Hobbes's notions on this subject we all know ; and Kant protests that they are shocking (*erschrecklich*). But I daresay you will dispense with this part of his Essay ; which is simply bent upon demonstrating that, although the people have no shadow of a right to enforce their rights,[2] yet still (contrary to that shocking man Hobbes's doctrine) they *have* some rights ; and, if the monarch—be his name what it may, king or senate—will not grant these rights, then they are to tell him, *by means of a free press*, that really he acts in a very disagreeable kind of way. But what if he refuse to allow them a free press (this being the one sole resource conceded to the people) ? Why, in that case, they are to wait until he takes a more transcendental view of the case.

Next I shall give you, my dear Sir Christopher, the

[1] Now, here again, had Mr. Kant condescended (when writing upon the affairs of a foreign nation), instead of speculating in a transcendental closet, to take the common-sense course of reading that nation's own account of its proceedings, speaking through its great political leaders at that era in their parliamentary debates, or speaking through its political annalists in their secret history of parties and intrigues at that time (such as Bishop Burnet, for instance), or speaking through those who have since discussed the great event of the Revolution, he would have learned why, with what explanations, reserves, and temperaments, and to what extent among the ruling parties contemporary with the case, that particular fiction of the *abdication* was adopted, and also in what light it has been considered by constitutional critics in the century and a half which have since elapsed.

[2] But, if there be no contradiction in having rights with no right (observe, not with no power, but absolutely no right) to enforce them, —why might not the gentlemen of 1688, who (in Kant's opinion) secretly reserved the right to a little rebellion, say, without contradiction, that the monarch, in case he should happen to violate the constitution fundamentally, had a strict right to the continued obedience of his subjects, but only no right to enforce this right ?

substance of Kant's famous Essay upon the famous problem of a Perpetual Peace ; which Essay, it has been alleged, was pillaged, during the French Revolution, by the celebrated Abbé Sieyes.

ESSAY TOWARDS REALIZING THE IDEA OF A PERPETUAL PEACE.

This Essay, of 112 pages, is not included in the four volumes of Kant's Miscellaneous Works published by Tieftrunk. *Why*, I cannot conjecture. It is true that it was not buried in the *rudera* of any voluminous periodical Miscellany, as others were among Kant's fugitive and occasional papers. It had been published separately ; and, perhaps, more than once ; for my edition (Koenigsberg, 1796) professes, on the title-page, to be a "*new and improved edition.*" But yet, as a volume of so little substance, so easily lost therefore, and upon a theme of so much interest and curiosity, —perhaps, beyond any other short Essay of Kant's, this merited preservation.

The problem of a Perpetual Peace, were it only for its impracticability taken in connexion with the reasons for that impracticability, will for ever retain its interest: that is to say, so long as it is not absolutely *demonstrated* to be a desperate problem ; and such a demonstration, considering that the objections are purely moral, is at least as impossible as the problem itself. With the prevailing tone of thought in this country, and under the despotism of the *practical* over every application of the mind, the mere entertainment of such a problem, though but for half an hour's speculation, is apt to throw the same sort of suspicion upon the sanity of a man's good sense as among geometricians *justly* attaches to the problem for *squaring the circle*, or among mechanicians to the problem of a *perpetual motion.* But, in reality, this is very unjust ; for the two mathematical problems are *demonstrably* impossible,—that is, *necessarily* unattainable, and for that reason *eternally*[1] so. But the moral problem of a Perpetual

[1] The general or unmathematical public are in a continual delusion about the nature of the barrier which separates us from the perfect

Peace is only accidentally unattainable: with every step taken in the moral development of human nature,—as, for instance, in the abolition of slavery (or, more philosophically speaking, in the possibility of such an abolition),—one step in advance would be gained towards the possible realization of a Perpetual Peace. For what makes such a problem impracticable at present? Simply the moral nature of man in its present imperfect development. The impracticability is therefore commensurate with that obstacle. As that wanes, this will wane; as that grows, if it ever *can* grow, this will grow. Properly speaking, therefore, a Perpetual Peace should be classed, as to feasibility, with the great geographical problems of the advance to the Pole, attainments of North-east or North-west Passages, determination of the Course of the Niger, much rather than with the mechanical problem of a Perpetual Motion. Take, for instance, the advance upon the Pole. This, in the first place, has been influenced greatly by a subjective obstacle—(*i.e.* an obstacle

solution of these problems. Every six months the newspapers announce that some self-taught mathematician of original genius has succeeded in squaring the circle. Upon this, the mathematician, without troubling himself to inquire into the particular form of the man's nonsense, contents himself with laughing. And to this laugh the non-mathematical observer replies by saying, or thinking, that *previous* to inquiry such a contemptuous dismissal of any man's pretensions is illiberal. But now let me explain to him that it is *not* so, and why. His mistake is in supposing the difficulty to be transcended merely a subjective difficulty; because, if that were so, he would be right in arguing that all the failures in the world could not be sufficient to preclude the hope that some day or other the thing might yet be accomplished. Not only would it be a really illiberal use of the *argumentum ad verecundiam* to forestall any man with the objection that Plato, Archimedes, Leibnitz, Euler, had not succeeded, and therefore what hope remained to a nameless tyro? for, obviously, each of these great names might have been urged with the same invidious purpose of stifling in the birth each one in succession of the other three; but, secondly, the man might fairly protest—"Measure the value of my talent by the discovery I offer, and not the value of my discovery by my talent wantonly and invidiously assumed"; or, thirdly, he might say—"Not as equal, still less as superior, to these great men, but as standing on their shoulders, I pretend to have seen farther than they"; or, fourthly, not even needing thus much assumption, but (whilst disclaiming a *higher* station, even upon their shoulders) simply insisting on the accidental *difference* of the station from which

entirely on the side of man, the agent, not on the side of nature, the subject of his attempt)—viz. the imperfect development of nautical science and nautical skill. These are progressive: in that proportion has the approximation been making for the two last centuries. But there are other elements to be contended with besides the sea. These are, as yet, even less tractable than *that* to our scientific resources. But a revolution, not greater than that effected by the steam-engine, may suddenly reduce them to obedience. And hence this problem can never become *demonstrably* desperate. A Perpetual Peace, without being liable to any such subsultory advances, yet so far agrees with these great physical problems that it is progressive, though more continuously, and therefore less perceptibly, progressive; at least, it is so in the faith of all those who believe in the continual moral advancement of the human species.

But now let us hear Kant[1]:—

he had contemplated the question at issue: on any one of these new grounds the candidate for the honours of discovery might roll back the burden of invidious feeling upon those who laughed at him *in limine*, were the barrier between us and the discovery of these truths merely subjective. But it is not so. The barrier is objective; it lies not in the person attempting, but in the thing attempted. And the commonest reader will understand what I mean, when I tell him that, if it were possible for the relation between the square and the circle (*i.e.* between the diameter and the circumference) to be assigned exactly, and not (as it now is) infinitely near,—the consequences would be, not merely (as he supposes) that a mind had arisen which saw what had escaped all former minds—so far all would be pure gain—but also that, for the first time, an internal war would arise in mathematics. Antinomies would be established; A and non-A would be equally true: contradictory positions would co-exist; in short, the supposed discovery would be inconsistent with existing truths. The objection, therefore, to a pretended squarer of the circle is not—"You, sir, by adding to our knowledge in a point impregnable to others, would compel us to believe you a greater than the greatest of those we honour"; but this—"You, sir, by propounding a discovery that would unsettle the foundations of our former knowledge, oblige us to disbelieve you on the faith of that very science to which you do and must appeal."

[1] What follows in smaller type is to be understood as a translation, according to De Quincey's notions of translation, from Kant's text.—M.

SIX ARTICLES UPON WHICH A PERPETUAL PEACE CAN BE FOUNDED.

I.—*No Treaty of Peace shall stand for such which is made with a secret reservation of matter for a future war.*

COMMENTARY.

Why? Because in that case it would be a mere armistice, in other words a mere postponement of hostilities, not a peace: for *that* means the end of all hostilities; and in reality the very idea of a peace is such that to qualify it with the epithet of *perpetual* is already something of a needless pleonasm. All grounds for future war existing at this moment, though possibly as yet unknown to the contracting powers, are understood to be annihilated by the treaty of peace, let them be afterwards fished out with ever so much dexterity and sharpness of vision from old archives. Any reserve (*reservatio mentalis*) of pretensions or grievances, to be first of all devised in future, which neither side mentions at present, because both are too much exhausted to pursue the war,—yet with an evil design to revive them on the first favourable occasion for this purpose,—is neither more nor less than Jesuitical Casuistry, and in that view below the dignity of sovereigns. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that, if the true honour of the state be placed, as agreeably to the maxims of state cunning it will be placed, in continual aggrandizement of its power, no matter by what means, in that case this principle of mine will be viewed as that of a mere scholastic and dreaming pedant.

II.—*No self-subsisting State (little or great is in this case all one) shall be capable of becoming the property of another State by inheritance, exchange, purchase, or gift.*

COMMENTARY.

A State in fact is not, like the soil on which it is seated, a possession (*patrimonium*).[1] It is a society of men, over which no person but itself can have peremptory rights of disposal. Now, to inoculate such a body, a stem with its own separate root, as a graft upon another state, is virtually to take away its existence as a moral *person*, and to treat it as a *thing*: this is in contradiction to the idea of the original contract, without which no right whatsoever over a people can be so much as conceived. Everybody knows into what grievous dangers the imaginary right of this mode of acquisition has in our times plunged Europe (for the other quarters of the globe seem

[1] "An hereditary kingdom is not a state which can be inherited by another state, but one whose governing rights can pass by inheritance to another physical person. But in this case the state, properly speaking, should be said to inherit a governor, not the governor *as* such (that is, as already possessing another kingdom) to inherit the state."—*Note of Kant.*

never to have recognised it), to the extent even of believing that states could marry each other. Partly it has been pursued as a new mode of industry, viz. as the art of creating an overbalance of power, without expense of exertion, by means of family compacts.

Even the loan of troops from one state to another, for hostile purposes against one who is not a common enemy, must be referred to the same head; for in this act the subjects of the state are used and abused at pleasure, as *things* or tools of mere manual application.

III.—*Standing Armies* (miles perpetuus) *shall gradually be altogether abolished.*

COMMENTARY.

My reason is this:—Standing armies threaten other states incessantly with war, chiefly by means of the front of defiance and eternal face of equipment which they present. Hence they irritate other states to perpetual and unlimited competition with each other in the number of their armed troops; and, whilst by the cost of these measures it happens that peace itself is at length more oppressive than a short war, eventually they become themselves the causes of offensive wars, adopted as the best chances for getting rid of such heavy pecuniary burdens. Add to this that for men to be taken into pay, as blank agents for killing or being killed, implies a use of them as pure machines or *things* which cannot well be reconciled with the rights of humanity involved in personality.

IV.—*There shall be no National Debts contracted with a view to external intercourse of the State.*

COMMENTARY.

For purposes of internal economy, this resource is not liable to suspicion:—but as a means of carrying on wars it is most dangerous; inasmuch as this single expedient, summoning all posterity, by way of anticipation, to the aid of the existing generation, transcends all resources combined of simple taxation.

V.—*No State shall intermeddle by intrigues with the Constitution or Government of another State.*

VI.—*No State, during a period of war with another State, shall allow itself in hostilities of such a quality as may preclude all future return to reciprocal confidence: for example, the employment of assassins or poisoners, the infraction of Capitulations, or the organization in the hostile country of domestic treason, &c.*

COMMENTARY.

These are all base, dishonourable stratagems. Some confidence in the honourable sentiments of the enemy must remain even during war;

else all peace, or treaty of any kind, becomes impracticable, and the war degenerates into a war of extermination (*bellum internecinum*); whereas war is at any rate, and at worst, but the sad resource of necessity to enforce rights by force in default of any court with adequate powers to enforce them by a process of law. In this view, it is plain that neither side can be pronounced an unjust enemy; for *that* would presuppose the function and authority of a judge; but the issue, as before the tribunal of God, is to decide which party is in the right. And between states no such thing as a penal war (*bellum punitivum*) is conceivable; because between states there is no such relation as that of superior and vassal. Hence it follows that a war of extermination, leaving no room or hope for a peace, except such as would be indeed perpetual by assembling all the combatants upon one general Aceldama, must be held to be under the ban of international law, and all the means and agents he held prohibited which lead to such a war.

Such are the six *preliminary* articles on which Kant's project is built. Three *definitive* articles follow, which are these: 1st, *That the internal constitution of all states shall be Republican;* 2d, *That their internal relations shall rest upon Federalism;* 3d, *That a cosmopolitical right shall be recognised in mankind to passive hospitality* (meaning by *that* the right of free intercourse to the extent of *access*, though not of *ingress*). The first of the three, coming from Kant, may startle you; but take it in connexion with his important explanation:—"That you may not," says he, "confound (as usually men "*do* confound) the idea of *republican* with the idea of *demo-*"*cratical*, attend to the following distinction:—Forms of "state polity may be divided on two principles:—First, on "a personal distinction in the supreme minister of the state, "as whether prince, nobles, or people. Here the distinction "is in the Form of Administration (*Forma Imperii*); and of "this no more than three modes are possible—*Autocracy*, "*Aristocracy, Democracy.* Or, secondly, the principle of dis-"tinction lies in the Mode of Administration (*Forma* "*Regiminis*); and in relation to this the State is of neces-"sity either *Republican* or *Despotic.* Republicanism is the "separation of the executive power from the legislative; "and of Democracy it may be affirmed that this only, of the "three *Formæ Imperii*, is essentially a Despotism." The third article sufficiently explains itself. As to the second, Kant supposes (p. 37) that the very same impulses which

have carried men, at a considerable price of personal sacrifice, to renounce the state of nature and lawless violence for one of social security, might weigh with States to an analogous renunciation of their right of war. True: but, in the case of the individual man, his surrender of power, once made, is *enforced* upon him by the government to which, by the supposition, he has resigned it. What corresponding force can be devised for States amongst each other still retaining their independence? Certainly no absolute one; but, as the best *surrogate*, Kant proposes a Federal Union of States. To those who should treat such a resource as a reverie, I would suggest the just remark of Kant, that all international law whatsoever (Fecial Law, Rights of Ambassadors, Laws of War, &c.) do of necessity appeal to and presuppose such a Federal State, no matter how immature. Indeed, recent *experience* is on the side of Kant. According to the remark of Mr. Southey (in his *Sir T. More*, vol. ii. p. 425), "The Holy Alliance, imperfect and unstable as it is, is in itself a recognition of the principle" (of a Perpetual Peace). Certainly this was the first step taken by leading nations to realize the *fact* of a Federal Areopagus for Europe, let the immediate *purpose* have been what it may. Meantime, the growth of a Federalism, purified for Kant's purpose, will be slow. Perhaps he did not himself think otherwise. Nay, it is very possible that the satirical signboard of a Dutch innkeeper, which he pleasantly alludes to in his preface,—viz. a churchyard, filled with graves, and bearing the sarcastic superscription of *Perpetual Peace*,—may, in fact, express the amount of his own *serious* anticipations in this region of human hopes.

I am really shocked, my dear friend, to find the length of my paper. Yet, supposing that I were treating the same subject in a separate book, rather than in a journal, I should be disposed to lengthen it by five entire essays: one, entitled the *Natural History of the Heavens*, in which Kant anticipated much of Herschel's views on the System of the Universe; another upon the idea of a *Race* in natural history, which deduces the physical varieties of man from a single aboriginal pair; a third, upon supposed marks of *senility* in our own

planet.[1] These would furnish popular illustrations of Kant's science; whilst his subtlety in paths more peculiarly his own would be best sustained by a little essay *On the Introduction into Philosophy of the idea of Negative Quantities*, and by his *Scheme of a Universal History on a Cosmopolitical plan.* This last I myself translated and published some years ago[2]; and I shall not think my time lost, were it only for the following opinion which this essay was the occasion of drawing recently from Mr. Southey:—"That Kant is as profound a philo-" sopher as his disciples have proclaimed him to be this little " treatise would fully convince me, if I had not already be-" lieved it in reliance upon one," &c.—*Southey's Sir T. More*, vol. ii. p. 408.

I had much to say of Kant in the way of blame; but I am not sorry that my last words about him happen to be those of praise,—and praise from a writer who had great prejudices to overcome, being, in an ultra-British sense, hostile to metaphysicians as a class.

By way of a literary curiosity for the History of Popular Sophisms, let me tell you at parting that the original root of the famous argument grounded upon the Protestant concession of safety to Romanism—(about which I have said so much in the earlier part of this letter[3]) lies in the following words of Arnobius[4]:—*Nonne purior ratio, ex duobus incertis et in ambigua expectatione pendentibus, id potius credere quod aliquas spes ferat quam quod omnino nullas?*—Yours ever, my dear Sir C X. Y. Z.[5]

[1] See *ante*, pp. 7-10.—M.

[2] The translation appeared in the *London Magazine* for October 1824.—M.

[3] *Ante*, pp. 99-102.—M.

[4] African Christian writer of latter part of the third century.—M.

[5] This had been De Quincey's usual signature to his articles in the *London Magazine* from 1821 to 1824. He carried it thence to *Blackwood*.—M.

GLANCE AT THE WORKS OF MACKINTOSH[1]

THIS collection comprehends, with one exception (viz. the *History of England*, which is published separately), all that is of permanent value in the writings of Sir James Mackintosh. The editor is the writer's son; and he, confident in powers for higher things, has not very carefully executed the minor duties of his undertaking. He has contributed valuable notes; but he has overlooked some important errors of the press, and he has made separate errors of his own. At page 387, vol. ii, Charles VII is described as king of *Sweden*, meaning clearly king of Denmark. At page 557 of the same volume, Sir James having referred to "a writer now alive in England" as one who had "published doctrines not dissimilar to those which Madame de Staël ascribes to Schelling," the editor suggests that probably the person in his eye was Mr. William Taylor of Norwich. This is the most unaccountable of blunders. Mr. Taylor of Norwich was among the earliest English students of German, and so far his name connects itself naturally with a notice of the *De l'Allemagne*. But, on the other hand, he never trespassed into the fields of metaphysics. He did not present any "allurements" in a "singular character," nor in "an unintelligible style"; neither was he the author of any "paradoxes." The editor is probably thinking of Taylor the

[1] The Miscellaneous Works of the Right Hon. Sir James Mackintosh. Edited by Robert James Mackintosh, Esq. In Three Volumes 8vo. London: Longman & Co. [In *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* for July 1846: reprinted by De Quincey in 1859 in vol. xiii of his Collective Edition.—M.]

Platonist, who was far more distinguished for absurdity, and is now equally illustrious for obscurity. But that either of these Taylors, or both, or even *nine* of them acting with the unanimity of one man, ever could have founded "a sect" is so entirely preposterous that the accomplished editor must pardon my stopping for half a minute to laugh. The writer whom Sir James indicated was probably "Walking Stewart": a most interesting man whom personally I knew; eloquent in conversation; contemplative, if *that* is possible, in excess; crazy beyond all reach of hellebore,—three Anticyræ would not have cured him; yet sublime and divinely benignant in his visionariness; the man who, as a pedestrian traveller, had seen more of the earth's surface, and communicated more extensively with the children of the earth, than any man before or since; the writer also who published more books (all intelligible by fits and starts) than any Englishman, except perhaps Richard Baxter, who is said to have published three hundred and sixty-five *plus* one, the extra one being probably meant for leap-year. Walking Stewart answers entirely to the description of Sir James's unknown philosopher: his character was most "singular"; his style tending always to the "unintelligible"; his privacy, in the midst of eternal publication, most absolute; his disposition to martyrdom, had anybody attempted it, ready and cheerful; and, as the "founder of a sect," considering his intense cloudiness, I am not at all sure but he might have answered as well as the Grecian Heracleitus, as Spinosa the Jew, or even as Schelling the Teutonic Professor. *His* plantations were quite as thriving as theirs; but the three foreigners fell upon happier times, or at least (as regards the last of them) upon a soil more kindly, and a climate more hopeful, for metaphysical growths.[1]

Not only has the editor done that which he ought *not* to have done; but too often he has left undone that which he *ought* to have done. The political tracts of the third volume require abundant explanations to the readers of this generation; and yet the notes are rare as well as slight.

There is no need, at this time of day, to take the altitude,

[1] For De Quincey's two papers on "Walking Stewart" see *ante*, Vol. III.—M.

intellectually, of Sir James Mackintosh. His position in public life was that of Burke; he stood as a mediator between the world of philosophy and the world of moving politics. The interest in the two men was the same in kind, but differently balanced. As a statesman, Burke had prodigiously the advantage,—not only through the unrivalled elasticity of his intellect, which in that respect was an intellect absolutely *sui generis*, but because his philosophy was of a nature to express and incarnate itself in political speculation. On the other hand, Sir James was far better qualified, by nature as well as by training, for the culture of pure abstract metaphysics. It is sometimes made a matter of regret that Burke should have missed the professor's chair which he sought. This is injudicious: as an academic lecturer on philosophy, or a speculator in ontological novelties, Burke would have failed. Not so Mackintosh. As to *him*, the regret would be reasonable: by detaching him from the cares of public business, a chair of philosophy would have widened the sphere of those higher speculations which, under *his* management, could not have been less than permanently profitable to the world.

To review so extensive a collection is clearly impossible within any short compass. I content myself with a flying glance at those papers which are likely to prove the most interesting.

MACKINTOSH ON STRUENSEE

The case of Count Struensee is to this hour wrapped in some degree of darkness: but, even under those circumstances of darkness, it is full of instruction. The doubts respect Struensee himself, and the unhappy young Queen Matilda: were *they* criminal in the way alleged by their profligate enemies? So far there is a cloud of mystery resting on the case; but, as to those enemies, as to the baseness of their motives, and the lawlessness of their acts, there is no doubt at all, and no shadow of mystery. This being so,—it being absolutely certain that the accusers were the vilest of intriguers, and unworthy of belief for a moment when at any point they passed the boundary line of judicial

proof, certified to Christendom by public oaths of neutral parties,—it follows that the accused are everywhere entitled to the benefit of any doubt, any jealousy, any umbrage, suspicion, or possibility, against the charge which *has* arisen, *shall* arise, or *can* arise, in the brain of the most hair-splitting special pleader. They that ruined better people than themselves by the wickedest of special pleading cannot have too much of it: let *them* perish, as regards history and reputation, by the arts which they practised.

King Christian the Seventh of Denmark came over to London early in the reign of George the Third:

> "It was in the golden prime
> Of good Haroun Alraschid."

He came by contract to fall in love with our Princess Matilda. But he had the misfortune to be "imbecile,"—which is a word of vague meaning; in fact, he was partially an idiot, and at times a refractory madman. It has been remarked, in connexion with Mr. Galt's excellent novels, that at one time (of course not the present time) too large a proportion of the Scottish lairds were secretly, and in ways best known to their households, daft; and in such a degree that, if not born gentlemen, they would certainly, by course of law, have been *cognosced*.[1] Perhaps the same tendency, and developed in part by the same defects of training, at that time affected the royal houses of Europe. Christian VII, if, instead of being a king, he had been a Scottish labourer, would certainly have been "cognosced." Amongst other eccentricities, that recoiled eventually upon others, he insisted on his friend's thumping him, kicking him, knocking him down, and scratching him severely; and, if his friend declined to do so, then he accused him of high treason. Really you had difficult cards to play with this daft laird of Copenhagen. If you positively refused to thump him, then

[1] "*Cognosced*":—A term well known to Scottish law, and therefore to Roman law. It means *judicially reviewed and reported*, no matter in reference to what. But, in common conversation, it has come elliptically to mean—*duly returned as an idiot*. *Cognosco*, it must be remembered, is the appropriate word, in classical Latin, for judicial review and investigation.

you were a rebel: an absolute monarch had insisted on your doing a thing, and you had mutinously disobeyed. If you thumped him, and soundly (which was the course taken by his friend Brandt [1]), then you were a traitor; you had assaulted the Lord's anointed, and were liable to question from the *lex majestatis*.

To London did this madman come; perhaps on the principle laid down by the grave-digger in Hamlet—that in England all men are mad, so that madness is not much remarked. The king saw London; and London saw *him*. But a black day it was for some people when he first set his face towards St. James's. The poor young Princess Matilda, sister to George III, and then only seventeen years old, became his unhappy wife; and Struensee, a young physician, whom he had picked up at Altona, about the same time received the fatal distinction of becoming his favourite and his minister. The frail personal tenure of such a situation, dependent on the caprices of a man imbecile equally as regarded intellect and as regarded energy of will, suggested to a cabal of court rivals the obvious means for overthrowing and supplanting the favourite. To possess themselves suddenly of the king's person was to possess themselves of the state authority. Five minutes sufficed to use this authority for the arrest of Struensee,—after which, as a matter of course, followed his close confinement, with circumstances of cruelty now banished everywhere even from the treatment of felons; to that succeeded his pretended trial, his pretended penitence, his pretended confession, and, finally, his execution.[2]

Sir James Mackintosh notices the *external* grounds of suspicion applying to the publications against Struensee, and particularly the doubtful position in respect to the conspirators of Dr. Munter, the spiritual assistant of the prisoner. This man was employed by the government: was he not used as a decoy, and a calumniating traitor? That point is still dark. He certainly published what he had no right to

[1] Brandt was Director of Amusements at the Danish Court. —M.

[2] On the 28th of April 1772. Brandt was executed at the same time.—M.

publish. Sir James is disposed, on the other hand, to find *internal* marks of sincerity in the doctor's account of his conversations with Struensee. But were not these in their very nature confidential? And Sir James himself remarks that nobody knows what became latterly of Munter himself; so that the vouchers for his veracity which might have been found in subsequent respectability of life are entirely wanting. General Falkenskiold's Memoirs[1] make us acquainted with the artifices used to obtain from the unhappy young queen a confession of adulterous intercourse with Struensee. And, if these artifices had been even unknown to us, it must strike everybody that such a confession, being so gratuitously mischievous to the queen, is not likely to have been made by her, in any case where she was free from coercion, or free from gross delusion. Equally on the hypothesis of her guilt or her innocence, the poor lady could have had no rational motive for inculpating herself, except such as would imply stratagems and frauds in the conspirators. The case seems to tell its own story. It was thought necessary to include Matilda in the ruin of Struensee, because else there was no certainty of *his* ruin; and upon *that* depended not only the prosperity of the intrigue, but the safety of the intriguers. The destruction recoiled upon themselves if the young queen regained the king's ear. But this could be prevented certainly by nothing short of her removal for ever from the court. And *that* could be accomplished only by a successful charge of adultery. Else, besides other consequences, the cabal feared the summary interposition of England. But of adultery, as they had no proof, or vestige of a proof, it became necessary to invent one, by obtaining a confession from the queen herself. And this was obtained by practising on her credulity, and her womanly feelings of compassion for the unfortunate. She was told by the knaves about her that an acknowledgment of guilt would save the life of the perishing minister.

There is something in this atrocious falsehood as to Struensee,—a part of the story which is not denied by any

[1] *Memoires de M. Falkenskiold, Officier-Général dans le Service de S. M. Danoise a l'Epoque de la Catastrophe du Comte de Struensee:* published in 1826.—M.

party,—reminding one of the famous anecdote about Colonel Kirke, in connexion with Monmouth's rebellion : a fable no doubt in *his* case, but realized by the Danish conspirators. They won their poor victim to what she abhorred by a promise that could have offered no temptation except to a generous nature ; and, having thus gained their villainous object, they did not even counterfeit an effort to fulfil the promise. A confession obtained under circumstances like these would weigh little with the just and the considerate.[1] But where is the proof that the queen *did* make such a confession ? No body of state-commissioners ever received anything of the kind from her own hands : nothing remains to attest it but the two first letters of her name,—having written which, she is said to have fainted away : but who wrote the words *above* her fraction of a signature, without which the signature is unmeaning, and *when* they were written, whether before or after that fractional signature, nothing survives to show. Besides, if Munter's account of penitential confessions in prison (many of which argue rather the abject depression from a bread-and-water diet, and from savage ill-treatment, than any sincere or natural compunction) are to be received against Struensee, much more ought we to receive the dying declarations of the young queen ; for these were open to no suspicions of fraud. Three years after her pretended confession, she declared to her spiritual attendant, M. Roques, that, although conscious of imprudences, she never had been criminal. This was her solemn declaration, in the midst of voluntary penitential expressions, and at a moment when she knew herself to be dying. Strange indeed, considering her youth, and her unhappy

[1] Sir James Mackintosh, though manifestly inclined to adopt this account of the pretended confession, a little weakens the case by saying,—"*If* General Falkenskiold was rightly informed," as though the invalidation of the confession were conditional upon the accuracy of the General. But, in fact, if *his* account were withdrawn, the conspirators are in a still worse position ; for the unfinished signature, *confessedly* completed surreptitiously by some alien hand, points strongly towards a physical compulsion exercised upon the queen,—such as had given way, and naturally *would* give way, under a violent struggle, after one or two letters had been extorted by forcibly guiding her hand.

position amongst enemies, knaves, and a lunatic husband, if she had *not* fallen into some imprudences.[1]

Meantime, Sir James Mackintosh is almost certainly wrong in his view of the course adopted by the English government. He imagines that, from mere excess of indisposition to all warlike movements at that time, this government shrank from effectual interference. But evidently the case was one for diplomatic management. And in that way it was effectually conducted to the best possible solution by the British ambassador, Sir Robert Murray ; who frightened the guilty intriguers out of their wits. Once satisfied that nothing would be attempted against the life of the queen, England had no motive for farther interference, nor any grounds to go upon. She could not have said, " I declare war against you because you have called a daughter of England by the foul name of adulteress." The case was too delicate, and too doubtful. Even now, after some light has been obtained, the grounds for a legal judgment are insufficient on either side : *then* they were much more so. The English *government* must also have been entirely controlled, in such a case, by the private wishes of the royal family ; and it was a natural feeling for *them*, when no prospect existed of a fair judicial inquiry amongst those who, in fighting against the queen, would be fighting for their own lives, to retire from a feud that could only terminate in fixing the attention of Europe upon the miserable charges and scandals,—charges that arose in self-interest, and scandals that were propagated by malice.

The moral of the story seems to lie in its exposure of the ruins and the absolute chaos worked by a pure despotism. All hangs by the thread of the sovereign's personal character. Here is a stranger to the land suddenly raised from the dust into a station of absolute control over the destinies of the people. *His* rise, so sudden and unmerited, calls forth rival adventurers ; and an ancient kingdom becomes a prize for a handful of desperate fortune-hunters. Is there no great interest in the country that might rally itself, and show front against this insufferable insult ? There is none. Had the case arisen in the old despotisms of France or of Spain, it

[1] She died in Hanover in 1775, having left Denmark in 1772.—M.

could have been redressed; for each of them possessed ancient political institutions that would perhaps have revived themselves under such a provocation. But in Denmark there were no similar resources. The body of the people, having no political functions through any mode of representation, were utterly without interest in public affairs: they had no *will* to move. The aristocracy had no *power*, unless in concert with the king. And the king was a lunatic. All centred, therefore, in half-a-dozen ruffians and their creatures; and the decencies of public justice, the interests of the innocent, with the honours of an ancient throne, went to wreck in their private brawls.

MACKINTOSH'S DISSERTATION ON THE PROGRESS OF ETHICAL PHILOSOPHY

This is the most valuable of all the twenty-eight tracts here collected. At the outset, however (p. 10), it shocks the sense of just logic not a little to find Sir James laying down the distinction between the Moral and the Physical Sciences as though "the purpose of the Physical were to answer the question—*What is?* the purpose of the Moral to answer the question—*What ought to be?*" Yet, at p. 238, Sir James himself makes it the praise[1] of a modern writer that he professes to have treated the moral affections "rather physiologically than ethically,"—as parts of our mental constitution, not as involving the fulfilment or violation of duties. Now, this is exactly the same thing as saying that he has translated the inquiry from the *ought* to the *is*; which translation Sir James views as an important change, and not, as may be fancied, important for the general field of Philosophy, but expressly for "the territory of Ethics." In reality, the merest *practical* guide to morals cannot evade continual glimpses into regions of pure theory. And, confining ourselves to the great *polemic* systems of morality, amongst which it is that Sir James's business lies, we must all be aware that their differences are not with respect to what should be done

[1] "*The praise*":—And even the special or separate praise of that writer,—which is far, indeed, from being true.

and left undone, but with respect to the *grounds* of doing and forbearing, or with respect to the method of deducing these grounds. It was a mistake of the same nature which led Coleridge to speak scornfully of a man's fancying any room, at this time of day, for innovation in Ethics, whether in the way of improvement or addition. To be novel, to be original, was upon this view unavoidably to be false; and no road, it seems, is open to truth in morals, except through the monotony of ancient commonplaces. But all this I vehemently deny. In days of old, the Academic, the Peripatetic, the Stoic, the Epicurean, sought for originality—not by patronising separate modes of action, but by deriving from separate principles the same modes, or by unfolding the various relations of objects that were still the same.[1] Not one of them dissented from the praise of patriotic zeal, of justice, of temperance, of veracity. You hear of nobody but a scoundrel Spartan (always too illiterate to write on Ethics) that ever thought of recommending immodesty to young women, or the picking of pockets to boys, or the flagellation of innocent children as an agreeable gymnastic exercise to grown-up gentlemen. Allowing for these denaturalized wretches on the banks of the Eurotas, all Greeks had *practically* the same final views in Ethics. What they differed in was the way of

[1] In speaking of Ethics, and of the room which it allows for vast variety of views, I confine myself naturally in the text to the part which concerns theory and speculation,—that being the part with which Sir James is occupied, and that being precisely the part which Coleridge overlooked in the passage referred to. But, even as regards the practical part, I cannot forbear calling the reader's attention to the gross blindness of that common sentiment which bids us look for nothing new in Ethics. What an instance of "seeing but not perceiving, hearing but not understanding!" So far from being stationary, Ethics, even as a *practical* system, is *always* moving and advancing, and without aid, or needing aid, from colleges or professors. A great part of our political life and struggling is but one vast laboratory for sifting and ascertaining the rights, the interests, the duties, of the unnumbered and increasing parties to our complex form of social life. Questions of rights (and consequently of duties) that were never heard of one and two centuries ago,—rights of captives, rights of public criminals, rights of pauperism, rights of daily labour, rights of private property amongst belligerents, rights of children born in camps, rights of creditors, rights of debtors, rights of colonists as against the mother country, rights of colonists as against the aborigines of their new

arriving at these final views: from what fountains they were to be derived; and, in passing down from these fountains, through what particular obstructions or collisions of principle they had to fight their way. It is the will, the *ought*, the practical, which is concerned in the final maxims of Ethics; but it is the intellect, the *is*, the theoretic, which is concerned chiefly in the early stages of its deduction.

One consequence, and an unfortunate consequence, from what I have here noticed as an oversight in Sir James, is that he has not examined the various opinions among the ancient Greek schools as to the *summum bonum*, nor apparently has adverted to the importance of such an examination. These conflicting opinions formed for *them* the rudders, or regulative principles, of their moral theories. We in Christendom have two concurrent sets of such theories: one of worldly ethics, in which "vice" and "virtue" are the prevailing terms; another of Christian ethics, in which the terms are "sin" and "holiness." And singular it is that these separate systems flow oftentimes quite apart, each deaf to the other, and nobody taking any notice of their collisions, or seeking for any harmony between them. The first class reposes chiefly on good sense and the prudential experience of life; the second, upon the revealed will of God. But, upon any

country, rights of the aborigines as against the colonists,—these questions, with countless others of the same class, are rising by germs and fractions in every newspaper that one takes up. Civil society is a vast irregular encampment, that even now, whilst we speak, is but beginning to take up its ground scientifically, to distribute its own parts, and to understand its own economy. In this view, one may quote with pleasure a sentence from David Hartley which is justly praised by Sir James Mackintosh,—"The rule of life, drawn from the practice and opinions of mankind, corrects and improves itself perpetually." And, as it does this by visiting, searching, trying, purifying every section and angle of the social system, it happens in the end that this very system, which had been the great *nidus* of evil and wrong, becomes itself a machinery for educating the moral sense. With this eternal expansion in new duties arising, or old ones ascertained, combine, reader, the unlimited invitation held out by growing knowledge to the recasting as to parts, or the resettlement as to foundations, of ethical theories; and you begin to look with amazement upon the precipitate judgment of Coleridge. If there is any part of knowledge that could be really condemned to stagnation, probably it would soon die altogether.

graver or more solemn interest of morals coming forward, recourse is usually had to some principles or other, more or less truly stated, professing to derive themselves from revelation. So that, in modern Europe, the Scriptures are a primary source of morals to some theorists, and a supplementary source to all. But the ancients, it must be remembered, had no such resource in revelation. Real or pretended revelation never existed for *them*; consequently, the revealed will of God, which at once settles amongst *us* what is the true *summum bonum* for man and his race, could not be appealed to, either as furnishing a foundation for ethical systems, or as furnishing their integration. In default of such a resource,—never, in fact, having heard or conceived of such a resource,—which way could the Greeks turn themselves? Naturally, and indeed necessarily, they set themselves to investigate the *summum bonum*, so far as it was fitted for a human nature. What was the supreme object after which man should strive? Was it pleasure, was it power, wisdom, happiness, or freedom from passion? Because, according to the decision, arose a corresponding economy of morals. The supreme good, whatever *that* were found to be, formed the *nucleus* around which the system of moralities crystallized and arranged themselves. Sir James regrets, with reason, the wrecked condition in which all the elder systems of Greek ethics are now lying. Excepting the Platonic remains generally, and the two works of Aristotle on this subject, we have no authentic documents to steer by. But, by collecting all the fragments, and looking back to the presiding view of the *summum bonum*, we might rebuild the outlines of the old ethics, at least as a fossil megatherium is rebuilt,—not so as to display its living power, but enough of its structure to furnish a basis for comparison.

It is singular that Sir James, with all his scholastic subtlety, should not have remarked the confusion which Paley, and others of his faction, make between utility as a *test* or *criterion* of morality and utility as a *ground* of morality. Taking it even in the limited sense of a test (that is, as the means by which we *know* an act to be moral, but not therefore as any ground or reason which *makes* the act to be moral), the doctrine is a mere barren theorem, perfectly inert

and without value for practical application; since the consequences of all important actions expand themselves through a series of alternate undulations, expressing successively good and evil, and of this series no summation is possible to a finite intellect. In its earliest and instant effects, a given act shall be useful: in its secondary effects, which we may distinguish as the undulation B, it shall become perhaps mischievous (mischievous, I mean, now that it has reached a new order of subjects): in C, the tertiary undulation, it shall revive into beneficial agencies; and in remoter cycles travel again into evil. Take for instance the French Revolution, or any single act by which a disinterested man should have deliberately hastened on that awful event: in what blindness must he have stood at the time, say about 1789, as to the ultimate results of his own daring step! First came a smiling dawn and the loveliest promise of good for man. Next came a dreadful overcasting, in which nothing could be seen distinctly,—storms and darkness, under cover of which innocent blood was shed like water, fields were fought, frenzies of hatred gathered amongst nations, such as cried to heaven for help and for retribution. That woe is past; the second undulation is gone by: and now, when the third is below our eyes, we are becoming sensible that all that havoc and fury, though sad to witness or to remember, were not thrown away; the chaos has settled into order, and a new morning with a new prospect has arisen for man. Yet even here the series of undulations is not complete. It is perhaps barely beginning: other undulations, moving through other revolutions, and perhaps fiercer revolutions, will soon begin to travel forward. And, if a man should fancy that he would wait for the final result before he made up his mind as to the question of moral verdict to be pronounced upon the original movement, he would make a resolution like that of a child who proposes to chase the rainbow.

As a *criterion*, therefore, the principle of utility could not be of any *practical* value for appraising an act or system of acts; since this utility is never known, even by approximation, until long after the election of the act must have been made. But a worse fault in Paley is that he has mistaken his own position, and lost in his perplexity the real object

which he was then in search of. This was exactly what the schoolmen would have called the *form*, *i.e.* formal principle or essence of virtue,—the *ratio essendi*; what, in fact, it is that constitutes the common ground or internal principle of agreement between two acts (one, suppose, an act of justice, one an act of temperance), so as to bring them equally under the common denomination of virtue.[1]

Perhaps the perfection of acuteness appears in Sir James Mackintosh's refutation of Paley upon the law of honour. Rarely has a false idea been more suddenly caused to founder and to show out. At one sling it is dispersed into smoke. And the reader is the more gratified because in fact Paley was doing a bit of sycophancy to public cant when he said the thing which Mackintosh exposes. What he said was this: The principle called *the law of honour* is worthless. An ordinary debt, for instance, to a tradesman may be neglected with no wound to a man's honour: not so a gaming debt; this becomes an obligation of honour. And very properly; because the latter sort of debt cannot be recovered compulsorily, but the other may. This power in the creditor, though it does not relieve you from the duty of paying him,

[1] Paley's error was, therefore, when scholastically expressed, a confusion between the *ratio essendi* and the *ratio cognoscendi*. About a hundred years ago, Daries, and some other followers of Leibnitz and Wolf, made an effort to recall this important distinction,—that is, to force the attention upon the importance of keeping apart the *index* or *criterion* of any object from its *essential or differential principle*. Some readers may fancy it more easy to keep these ideas apart than systematically to confound them. But very many cases, and this of Paley's in particular, show that there is a natural tendency to such a confusion. And, upon looking more rigorously, I perceive that Sir James Mackintosh has *not* overlooked it; he has in fact expressed it repeatedly, but always in terms that would hardly have conveyed the full meaning to my mind if I had not been expressly seeking for such a meaning. At p. 14 (vol. i.) he thus distinguishes:—"These momentous inquiries relate to at least two perfectly distinct subjects: I. The nature of the distinction between Right and Wrong in human conduct; and, II. The nature of those feelings with which Right and Wrong are contemplated by human beings. The discrimination has seldom been made by moral philosophers; the difference between the two problems has never been uniformly observed by any of them." At p. 15 he taxes both Paley and Bentham with having confounded them; and subsequently, at p. 193, he taxes the latter still more pointedly with this capital confusion.

most properly relieves you from the stress upon your honour. Honour creates a sanctity in that only which is confided to the keeping and sanction of honour. It is good for so much as it undertakes. But, if this were even otherwise, how is Paley entitled to presume, in any law, a countenance to crimes of which that law simply takes no cognisance? "His "chapter," says Sir James, "on what he calls the Law of "Honour is unjust even in its own small sphere, because it "supposes Honour to *allow* what it *does not forbid*; though "the truth be that the vices enumerated by him are only "not forbidden because they are not within its jurisdiction." Honour tells a man to repay a friend who lent him money at a critical moment of distress, and who holds no voucher for that money: but honour never told a man *not* to pay his shoemaker. That sort of debt indeed honour does not enforce, though far from discountenancing its payment, simply because such a case does not fall within its proper cognisance. But as well might the Court of Chancery be reproached for not trying the crime of murder. If we adopted the infirm logic of Paley, we should be bound in such a case to infer that our Supreme Court of Equity looked indulgently upon the crime of murder.

There are two most weighty remarks at p. 106, connected by Sir James with this subject of Paley. One is that, even if the law of honour ceased as a separate mode of obligation (not contradicting general moral laws, but only unequally enforcing them), still there would remain a natural and transcendent law of sexual morality, as much distinct from the higher ethics as the worldly principle of honour: viz. that morality which makes the characteristic virtue of a man to lie in courage, of a woman in chastity. Great good is done, and much of social welfare is upheld, by such a morality, and also, as by the rule of honour, some wrong, because much practical partiality, and oftentimes much disproportion to our judgments. Yet here is a mode of morality, imperfect as honour is imperfect, but not therefore false, and which still works for good, and which all the Paleys in this world will fortunately never be able to shake.

The other remark concerns the *tendency* of Paley's philosophy; which, having little grandeur or enthusiasm to support it, was morbidly disposed to compromise with evil,

and to "go for" as much good as seemed conveniently to be got. Most justly does Mackintosh tax it with looking in the same direction as the worst ethics of the Roman Catholics,—that is, the ethics of Escobar and the most intensely worldly amongst the Jesuits. Upon that he argues that no philosophy can be so unfitted for the training of the moral sense, or for the culture of the noble and the enthusiastic as it exists in early manhood. Oxford, but more especially Cambridge, as carried by old connexion too naturally to an exaggerated estimate of Paley, would do well to think of this. Paley's talents, within lower spheres of speculation, were prodigious. But he wanted everything that should have fitted him for what is subtlest in philosophy, or what is grandest in ethics. Continue to honour the man as the most philosophic amongst the essentially worldly-minded; but do not ratify and countersign his *hybrid* morality by making it a chief text of your ethics, and an examination-book for the young aristocracy of England.

MACKINTOSH ON MACHIAVEL

There is a short but fine and very important exordium[1] to the paper on Machiavel, exposing the relations of literature to science, to ethics, and to speculative philosophy. That function of literature by which it reacts upon all these great interests, so as to diffuse them, to popularize them, to protect them, and to root them, is apt enough to escape the notice of most men, who regard literature as a mere embellishment of life, not as one of its deep-sunk props. And yet, as Sir James truly remarks, in times when the whole philosophic speculation of a country gathers itself into cloistral retreats, and when as yet there is no general literature to diffuse its results and to naturalize its capital problems amongst the people, nothing is more liable to sudden blights than such insulated advances in culture; which, on the other hand, become ineradicable when once they have knit themselves on to the general mind of the people by the intertexture of literature. Spinning this kind of *nidus* for

[1] "*Exordium*":—An exordium which virtually (and in parts verbally) repeats a similar passage at pp. 44, 45 of vol. i.

itself, the larva of the future chrysalis becomes safe; whilst otherwise it is in constant peril.

What suggests this train of thought is the fact that Machiavel, amongst prose-writers on speculative and abstract themes, was one of the first who "stooped to conquer" by laying aside the borrowed dignity of a learned language. Being an Italian, he wrote Italian; he adapted himself to the popular mind amongst his countrymen; he spoke to them in their mother tongue. By such an effort a man sacrifices a little momentary rank in the estimate of critics, to regain it a hundredfold in an influence wide and lasting over the general heart. The choice of Machiavel was wise, and yet perhaps not made in the spirit of wisdom, but of rancorous passions. He could not reach his enemies by his republican patriotism, or his fierce miso-tramontanism, *without* Italian; he could not reach his friends by counsels that should guide their exterminating swords, unless through a familiar dialect. The same malicious and destroying wisdom, in the same service of a vindictive heart, burns in the most famous of his works, *The Prince*. This work it is, and the true interpretation of its reckless insensibility to the wickedness of the machinery by which it works, that probably constituted the reason to Sir James Mackintosh for at all turning his attention upon Machiavel.

It has always been a riddle whether *The Prince* of Machiavel were meant for a Titan satire upon the profligacy of political agents, or very seriously for a Titan theory of evil arts as the only weapons commensurate to the unscrupulous wickedness of men armed with power. It is Sir James Mackintosh's wish to side with the former view of the question:—"*The Prince*," says he, "is an account of the "means by which tyrannical power is to be acquired and "preserved: it is a theory of that class of phenomena. It "is essential to its purpose, therefore, that it should contain "an exposition of tyrannical arts. But it is also plain that "the calm statement of tyrannical arts is the bitterest of all "satires against them." Yes, for him who has already preconceived such a view of tyrannical arts; but no satire at all for him who has reconciled himself to such arts, as the indispensable means of placing men upon a level with their

enemies, and cities upon equal terms with their rivals. When Gulliver talked with coolness and smiling amateurship of every art used in Christian warfare for hacking, hewing, slashing, maiming, or burning the framework of human bodies, he was viewed by his royal auditor, after hearing him coolly to the end, as the most horrid little monster on the terraqueous globe. But Gulliver had so little suspected any liability in his own opinions to such a construction that he had talked with the self-satisfied air of a benevolent philosopher teaching the *old* idea how to shoot.

"A philosophical treatise on poisons would," says Mackintosh, "determine the quantity of each poisonous substance "capable of producing death, the circumstances favourable or "adverse to its operation, and every other information essen- "tial to the purpose of the poisoner, though not intended for "his use." Something like this has been pleaded on behalf of Machiavel by others. But in fact it will not bear a critical scrutiny. For all depends on the mode of presenting the poisonous arts. In a little chemico-medical manual lying before me at this moment, the Parisian author, speaking of the modes employed to colour wines, says, "On peut jaunir ces liquides" (white wines) "à l'aide du gaz acide sulfureux : cette fraude est dangereuse, si l'acide se trouve en assez grande quantité." Now, here there is something not strictly correct ; for the writer teaches a secret which he knows to be profitable on one hand and dangerous on the other, with a slight caution that he might easily have made a full one. The secret is likely to be tried, it is likely to cause danger ; whilst the simple means for evading the danger, viz. by stating the proper proportions, he is too indolent to report. Yet still, though blamable, this author is far above being suspected of any wish to teach murderous arts. And what is the proof of this ? Why, that he never introduces any substance for the mere purpose of showing its uses as a poison ; but, when *other* uses have obliged him to notice it, he takes occasion to caution the reader as to those which are dangerous. If a man were answerable for all the indirect or inverse modes of reading his book, then every writer on medical jurisprudence would be liable to indictment ; for such works may be always turned to account as

reversely systems of poisoning; the artifices for detecting guilt may always be applied by a Locusta (Sueton. *in Claudio*) or a Brinvilliers as so many directions for aiding its operations; just as the Lord's Prayer, read backwards, was of old times the shortest means for evoking the fiend. Now, Machiavel's arts of tyranny are not collected from this sort of reading backwards: they compose a good, honest, and straightforward assertion of wholesale wickedness as absolutely essential to prosperity and comfort of mind in this shocking world. Many have fancied that, if challenged as an elaborate jester in masquerade, Machiavel would have burst into explosions of laughter. Far from it: he would have looked as angry and disconcerted as Gulliver, and would have said, probably, "Oh, if you come to virtue, and all that sort of thing, really I pretend to no opinions on the subject: I am addressing myself to men of sense, and simply taking it for granted that, *as* such, in a world of universal kicking and being kicked, they will wish to kick back in every direction."

But the defect of Sir James Mackintosh's paper is the neglect of positive extracts from *The Prince*, given in their true connexion. Such a treatment would soon have dispersed any doubts about the final drift of the work. For, suppose that in a work on poisons (to adopt Mackintosh's own illustration) you met with a little section like this:—"With respect to the proper mode of despatching young toothless infants, I always set my face against the use of poison. I do so on moral principle, and also as a man of refinement. It is evident that poison in such a case is quite needless: you may operate more speedily by a little lavender water: this will be agreeable to both parties, yourself and the child: pour a few spoonfuls into a slop-basin; hold the little human kitten with its face downwards in this, and it will hardly have time to mew before the trick will be done. Now observe the difference of circumstances with respect to an adult. How pleasing it is to the benign heart that nature should have provided so vast a gamut in the art of murder! To the philosophic mind it suggests the idea that perhaps no two people ought to be murdered in the same manner. Suppose, for instance, the subject marked for immediate despatch to be your uncle,—a huge, broad-

shouldered monster, evidently quite unfit to live any longer. I should say, now, that a dose of corrosive sublimate would be the correct thing for *him*. Phlebotomy would never do with such a bullock as that. He would turn a mill with his blood, and the place of operating would become a mere shambles. If, again, you attempted to repeat upon *him* the experiment that had succeeded with the infant, surprising and holding him down in the water when washing his face, the refractory ruffian would assuredly break the basin in his struggles : his face would be lacerated ; and, when his howling had brought the police to his assistance, the streaming blood would give an air of plausibility to his odious calumny that you had been attempting to cut his throat ; whereas *he* knows, as well as *you* know, that not a drop of blood would have been spilt, and very little water, had he forborne making so horrid an uproar."

After such a passage, I suppose few people would be satisfied with Sir James's construction of the book :—" It is an account of the means by which the art of assassination is to be acquired and preserved : it is a theory of that class of phenomena. It is essential to its purpose, therefore, that it should contain an exposition of murder in all its varieties." In reality, the state of Italian society in those days, as Sir James himself suggests, is the best key to the possibility of such a work as *The Prince*, but, at the same time, the best guarantee of its absolute sincerity. We need only to read the autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini, who was a contemporary of Machiavel,[1] to see with what reckless levity a man naturally generous and brave thought of avenging his slightest quarrel by a pistol-shot from some cowardly ambuscade. Not military princes only, but popes, cardinals, bishops, appear to have employed murderers, and to have sheltered murderers as a necessary part of their domestic garrisons,—often to be used defensively or in menace, but, under critical circumstances, to be used aggressively for sudden advantages. It was no mistake, therefore, in Frederick of Prussia to reply calmly and elaborately to *The Prince* as not meant for a jest, but as a serious philosophic

[1] Niccolo Machiavelli, 1469-1527 ; Benvenuto Cellini, 1500-1570. —M.

treatise offered to the world (if on such a subject one may say so) in perfect *good faith*. It may perhaps also be no mistake, at all events it proves the diffusive impression as to the cool wickedness of the book, that in past times many people seriously believed the name of Old *Nick* (one of the vulgar expressions for the Devil) to have been an off-set from the name of *Niccolo* Machiavelli.[1]

MACKINTOSH ON THE "ICON BASILIKÉ"

People in general imagine that the question relating to the *Icon Basiliké* is obsolete and hastening to decay. But, more properly, it should be described as in the condition of those tapestries which fade into dimness when laid aside for a long time into dark repositories, but, upon being brought back to sunlight, revive gradually into something of their early life and colouring.[2] There are four separate reasons why the authorship of this book will always remain an interesting problem for the historical student :—

1*st*, Because it involves something of a mystery. In this respect it resembles the question as to the Gowrie Conspiracy, as to the Iron Mask, &c. &c. ; and, unless some new documents should appear,—which is not quite impossible, but is continually growing nearer to an impossibility, — it will *remain* a mystery ; but a mystery which might be made much more engaging by a better mode of presenting the evidence on either side, and of pointing the difficulties that beset either conclusion.

2*dly*, Because it is an instructive example of conflicting

[1] But this is altogether a mistake. English people resident in Southern France (and amongst them, I think, the late Lady Blessington) have been often made aware of a common nursery artifice for alarming refractory children in the appeal to *Niccolo*,—far too profoundly traditional to have been borrowed from any book, much less from a book of doubtful interpretation, and in an alien language.

[2] "*Life and colouring*" :—Such a change happened, three or four years ago, to what are called The Raphael Tapestries. After having been laid up in darkness for about ten years, they were brought out and exhibited at Manchester ; after which the crimsons deepened remarkably under constant exposure to light, the blues clarified themselves, and the harmonies of the colouring began to revive.

evidence ; which evidence, having long been sifted by various cross-examiners, sharp as razors from ability and from reciprocal animosity, has now become interesting for itself. The question it was which interested at the first ; but at length the mere testimonies, illustrated by hostile critics, have come to have a separate interest of their own, apart from the point at issue.

3*dly*, The book has a close connexion with the character of Charles I. ; which is a character meriting a profound attention, where its native features are brought under the light of the very difficult circumstances besetting its natural development.

4*thly*, The book is one of that small number which (like the famous pamphlet of the Abbé Sieyes on the *Tiers État*) produced an impression in its day worthy to be called *national*. According to my present recollection, I must myself have seen the forty-ninth edition ; at present (May 1846) it wants but thirty-two months of full two hundred years[1] since the publication of the book. Such an extent of distribution in an age of readers so limited, such a duration of the interest connected with a question so personal, is the strongest testimony extant of the awe pursuing so bold an act as the judicial execution of a king.

Sir James Mackintosh takes up the case as against Dr. Wordsworth. And, being a lawyer, he fences with the witnesses on the other side in a style of ease and adroitness that wins the reader's applause. Yet, after all, he is not the more satisfactory for being brilliant. He studied the case neither more nor less than he would have done a brief : he took it up on occasion of a sudden summons *ab extra* ; and it is certain that no justice will ever be done to *all* the bearings of the evidence unless the evidence is examined *con amore*.

[1] The king suffered on the 30th of January 1649. And I have somewhere read an anecdote that Royston, the publisher, caused several copies, the first that were sufficiently dry, to be distributed amongst the crowd that surrounded the scaffold. This was a bold act. For Royston and all his equipage of compositors were in great peril already by their labours at the press. Imprisonment for political offences was fatal to three out of four in those days ; but the penalties were sometimes worse than imprisonment for offences so critically perilous as that of Royston.

It must be a labour of love, spontaneous, and even impassioned, and not of mere compliance with the suggestion of a journal, or the excitement of a new book, that will ever support the task of threshing out and winnowing *all* the materials available for this discussion.

Were I proprietor of this journal,[1] and entitled to room *à discretion*, perhaps I might be indiscreet enough to take forty pages for my own separate use. But, being merely an inside passenger, and booked for only one place, I must confine myself to my own allotment. This puts an end to all idea of reviewing the whole controversy; but it may be well to point out one or two oversights in Sir James Mackintosh.

The reader is aware of the question at issue: viz. whether the *Icon*, which is supposed to have done so much service to the cause of royalty by keeping alive the memory of Charles I. in the attitude of one forgiving injuries, or expostulating with enemies in a tone of apparent candour, were really written by the king himself, or written *for* him, under the mask of his character, by Dr. Gauden.[2] Sir James, in this case, is counsel for Dr. Gauden. Now, it happened that, about six months after the Restoration, this doctor was made Bishop of Exeter.[3] The worthy man was not very long,—viz. exactly forty-eight days,—in discovering that Exeter was "a horror"[4] of a bishopric. It *was* so; he was quite correct

[1] *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*: in the number of which for July 1846 this paper on Mackintosh was published.—M.

[2] John Gauden, born 1605, made D.D. of Oxford in 1641, became Rector and Rural Dean of Bocking in Essex in 1642, and was in that post, with some reputation as an author, and latterly as an ardent Royalist, at the time of the execution of Charles in January 1648-9. He remained in the same living, with increasing literary reputation on account of pamphlets, &c., in the Anglican and Royalist interest, till the Restoration of May 1660; immediately after which, and the re-establishment of the Church of England on its former basis, he was one of those selected by Clarendon for conspicuously deserved ecclesiastical preferment.—M.

[3] Gauden went to Exeter as the newly-appointed Bishop of Exeter in December 1660.—M.

[4] "*A horror*":—It is true that Dr. Gauden received a sum of twenty thousand pounds within the first year; but *that* was for renewal of leases that had lapsed during the Commonwealth suppression of the sees, and nothing so great was likely to occur again.

there : "horror" is his own word ; and a horror it was until a late act for exalting the weak and pulling down the mighty. Sir James seems to have thought this phrase of "a horror" *un peu fort* for so young a prelate. But it is to be considered that Dr. Gauden came immediately from the rural deanery of Bocking, where the pastures are good. And Sir James ought to have known, by one memorable case in his own time, and charged upon the injustice of his own party, that it is very possible for a rural parson leaving a simple rectory to view even a bishopric as an insupportable affront,—and in fact as an atrocious hoax or swindle, if the rectory happened to be Stanhope, worth in good mining years six thousand *per annum*, and the bishopric to be Exeter, worth, until lately, not so much as two. But the use which Sir James makes of this fact, coming so soon after the king's return, is that assuredly the doctor must have had some conspicuous merit, when so immediately promoted, and amongst so select a few. That merit, he means to argue, could have been nothing else or less than the seasonable authorship of the *Icon*.

It is certain, however, that the service which obtained Exeter was *not* this. Worcester, to which Gauden afterwards obtained a translation, and the fond hope of Winchester, which he never lived to reach, may have been sought for on the argument of the *Icon*.[1] But Exeter was given on another consideration. This is certain, and, if known to Sir James, would perhaps have arrested his final judgment.

2. Sir James quotes, without noticing their entire inaccuracy, the well-known words of Lord Clarendon,—that, when the secret (as to the *Icon*) should cease to be such, "nobody would be gladd of it but Mr. Milton." I notice this only as indicating the carelessness with which people read,

[1] Gauden had expected the great bishopric of Winchester, but had been obliged to be content with promotion from the bishopric of Exeter to that of Worcester. The promotion was in May 1662 ; and he died at Worcester on the 20th of September in the same year.—De Quincey seems to have been but imperfectly informed about the facts of Gauden's life, and the overwhelming evidence furnished by his own letters, and by Clarendon's conduct to him, that he was the real author of the *Icon Basilike*. It is amazing to me that there should have remained since the publication of the *Clarendon State Papers* in 1786 a rag of doubt on the subject.—M.

and the imperfect knowledge of the facts even amongst persons like Lord Clarendon, having easy access to the details and contemporary with the case. Why should the disclosure have so special an interest for Milton? The *Icon Basiliké*, or Royal Image, having been set up for national worship, Milton, viewing the case as no better than idolatry, applied himself to pull down the idol; and, in allusion to the title of the book, as well as to the ancient sect of Iconoclasts, he called his own exposure of the *Icon* by the name of *Iconoclastes*, or the Image-breaker.[1] But Milton had no interest in Lord Clarendon's secret. What he had meant by *breaking the image* was, not the showing that the king had not written the book, but that whoever had written it (king or anybody else) had falsely represented the politics and public events of the last seven years, and had falsely coloured the king's opinions, feelings, and designs, as expounded by his acts. Not the title to the authorship was what Milton denied: of *that* he was comparatively careless: but the king's title to so meek and candid a character as was there portrayed. It is true that, laughingly, and *in transitu*, Milton notices the unlikelihood of a king's finding leisure for such a task; and he notices also the internal marks of some chaplain's hand in the style. That same practice in composition which suggested to Sir James Mackintosh his objections to the style, as too dressed and precise for a prince writing with a gentleman's negligence, suggested also to Milton his suspicion of a clerical participation in the work. He thought probably,—which may, after all, turn out to be true, —that the work was a joint product of two or more persons. But all *that* was indifferent to his argument. His purpose was to destroy the authority by exposing the falsehood of the book. And his dilemma is framed to meet either hypothesis,—that of the king's authorship, or that of an anonymous courtier's. Written *by* the king, the book falsifies facts in a way which must often have contradicted his own official knowledge, and must therefore impeach his veracity. Written *for* the king, the work is still liable to the same charge of *material* falsehood,

[1] Milton's "*Eikonoklastes*, in Answer to a Book entitl'd *Eikon Basilike*," was published in October 1649, after the *Eikon Basilike* had been in circulation for eight months.—M.

though probably not of conscious falsehood: so far the writer's position may seem improved; one who was not in the Cabinet would often utter untruths without knowing them to be such: yet again this is balanced by the deliberate assumption of a false character for the purpose of public deception.[1]

3. Amongst the passages which most affect the king's character on the former hypothesis (viz. that of his own authorship) is the 12th section of the *Icon*, relating to his private negotiations with the Irish Roman Catholics. The case stands thus:—Charles had been charged with having excited (or permitted his Popish Queen to excite) the Irish Rebellion and Massacre of 1641. To this charge, being factious and false, it was easy for him to reply with the bold front of an innocent man. There was next a second charge, of having negotiated with the rebels subsequently to their insurrection. To this also there was a reply,—not so triumphant, because, as a fact, it could not be blankly denied; but, under the state difficulties of the king, it was capable of defence. Thirdly, however, there was a charge quite separate and much darker, which, if substantiated, would have ruined the royal cause with many of its stanchest adherents. This concerned the secret negotiation with the Popish nuncio through Lord Glamorgan. It may be ninety years since Dr. Birch, amongst his many useful contributions to English History, brought to life this curious correspondence; and since that day there has been no room for doubt as to the truth of the charge. Lord Glamorgan was a personal friend of the king, and a friend so devoted that he submitted without a murmur to be represented publicly as a poor imbecile creature,[2]—this being the sole retreat open to the king's own

[1] Clarendon's saying that nobody but Mr. Milton would be glad of the revelation of Gauden's claim to the authorship of the *Eikon Basilike* may be interpreted as meaning that, though it might be a disappointment to Mr. Milton to find that after all he had not had a king for an antagonist, on the other hand there would be some satisfaction to him in having his shrewd guess confirmed that the king was not the real author of the *Eikon*, and in witnessing the discomfiture of the Royalists if they had to acknowledge that the book they had been worshipping as something of actually divine quality was the mere fabrication of a second-rate ecclesiastical rhetorician.—M.

[2] This "poor imbecile creature" was the original suggester of the steam-engine. He is known in his earlier life as Lord Herbert, son

character. Now, the *Icon* does not distinguish this last charge, as to which there was *no* answer, from the two others, where there *was*. In a person situated like Gauden, and superficially acquainted with political facts, this confusion might be perfectly natural. Not so with the king; and it would deeply injure his memory if we could suppose him to have benefited artfully by a defence upon one charge which the reader (as he knew) would apply to another. Yet would it not equally injure him to suppose that he had accepted from another such an equivocating defence? No: for it must be recollected that the king, though he had read, could not have had the opportunity (which he anticipated) of revising the proof sheets; consequently we know not what he might finally have struck out. But, were it otherwise, Sir James Mackintosh argues that the dishonesty would, under all the circumstances, have been trivial, when confined to the act of tolerating an irrelevant defence, in comparison of that dishonesty which could deliberately compose a false one. So far I fully agree with Sir James: his apology for the *defence* of the act, supposing that defence to be Gauden's, is sufficient. But his apology for the act itself is, I fear, untenable. He contends that "it certainly was not more unlawful for him" [the king] "to seek the aid of the Irish Catholics than it was for his opponents to call in the succour of the Scotch Presbyterians." How so? The cases are most different. The English and the Scottish Parliaments were on terms of the most brotherly agreement as to all capital points of policy, whether civil or religious. In both Senates all were Protestants; and the preponderant body, even in the English Senate, up to 1646, were Presbyterians,

of Lord Worcester, who at that time was an earl, but afterwards raised to a marquisate; and subsequently the son was made Duke of Beaufort. And from him the present House of Beaufort (the old royal Plantagenet Somersets), Lord Raglan, &c., are the direct lineal descendants. Apart from the negotiations with the nuncio, the king's personal bargain with Lord Herbert (whom he made Earl of Glamorgan, as a means of accrediting him for this particular Irish service) was tainted with marks of secret leanings to Popery. Lord Glamorgan's family were Papists; and into this family, the house of Somerset having Plantagenet blood in their veins, the king was pledged to give a daughter in marriage, with a portion of three hundred thousand pounds.

and, one may say, Scottish Presbyterians; for they had taken the Covenant. Consequently no injury, present or in reversion, to any great European interest, could be charged upon the consciences of the two Parliaments; whereas the Kilkenny Treaty, on Charles's part, went to the direct formal establishment of Popery as the Irish Church, to the restoration of the lands claimed as Church lands, to a large confiscation, and to the utter extermination of the Protestant interest in Ireland. The treaty did all this by its tendency; and, if it were to be prevented from doing it, *that* could only be through prolonged war, in which the king would have found himself ranged in battle against the Protestant faith. The king not only testified his carelessness of the Protestant interest, but he also raised a new and a rancorous cause of civil war.

The truth is that Mackintosh, from the long habit of defending the Roman Catholic pretensions as applying to our own times, was tempted to overlook the difference which affected those pretensions in 1645-6. Mark the critical point of time. A great anti-Protestant league of kingdoms had existed for a century, to which Spain, Austria, Bavaria, many Italian states, and, intermittingly, even France, were parties. The great agony of this struggle between Popery and the Reformation came to its crisis, finally and for ever, in the Thirty Years' War; which, beginning in 1618 (just one hundred years after Luther's first movement), terminated in 1648, by the Peace of Westphalia. That treaty it was, balancing and readjusting all Christendom, until the French Revolution again unsettled it, that first proclaimed to the Popish interest the hopelessness of further efforts for exterminating the Protestant interest. But this consummation of the strife had not been reached by four or five years at the time when Charles entered upon his jesuitical dealings with the Popish council in Ireland,—dealings equally at war with the welfare of struggling Europe, with the fundamental laws of the three kingdoms which the king ruled, and with the coronation oaths which he had sworn. I, that feel deep pity for the afflicted prince, whose position blinded him, of necessity, to the truth in many things, am the last person to speak harshly of his conduct. But undoubtedly he com-

mitted a great error for his reputation, that would have proved even a fatal error for his interests had it succeeded at the moment, and that might have upset the interests of universal Protestantism, coming at that most critical moment. This case I notice, as having a large application ; for it is too generally true of politicians arguing the Roman Catholic claims in these modern days, when the sting of Popery as a political power is extracted, that they forget the very different position of Protestantism when it had to face a vast hostile confederation, always *in procinctu* for exterminating war in case a favourable opening should arise.

Taking leave of the *Icon Basiliké*, I would express my opinion that the question is not yet exhausted : the pleadings must be re-opened. But in the meantime no single arguments have been adduced against the king's claim of equal strength with these two of Sir James's,—one drawn from external, the other from internal evidence :—

First, that, on the Gauden hypothesis, Lord Clarendon's silence as to the *Icon* in his History, though not strictly correct, is the venial error of a partisan ; but that, on the other, or anti-Gauden hypothesis, his silence is fatal to his own character as a man decently honest, and yet without an intelligible motive.

Secondly, that the *impersonal* character of the *Icon* is strongly in favour of its being a forgery. All the rhetorical forgeries of the latter Greek literature, such as the Letters of Phalaris, of Themistocles, &c., are detected by that mark. These forgeries, applying themselves to ages distant from the writer, are often, indeed, self-exposed by their ignorant anachronisms. That was a flaw which could not exist in a forgery applied to contemporary events. But else, in the want of facts, of circumstantialities, and of personalities, such as were sure to grow out of love or hatred, there is exactly the same air of vagueness, and of timid dramatic personation, in the *Icon* as in the old Greek knaveries.

MACKINTOSH'S MISCELLANEOUS WORKS

Perhaps it would have been an advantageous change for this republication of Sir James Mackintosh's works if the

entire third volume had been thrown overboard, so as to lighten the vessel. This volume consists of political papers that are at any rate imperfect from the want of many documents that should accompany them, and are otherwise imperfect, laudably imperfect, from their author's station as a political partisan. It was his duty to be partial. These papers are merely contributions to a vast *thesaurus*, never to be exhausted, of similar papers. Dislocated from their general connexion, they are useless; whilst, by compelling a higher price of admission, they obstruct the public access to other articles in the collection, which have an independent value, and sometimes a very high value, upon the very highest subjects. The ethical dissertation is crowded with just views as regards what is old, and with suggestions brilliant and powerful as regards all the openings for novelty. Sir James Mackintosh has here done a public service to education and the interests of the age, by setting his face against the selfish schemes of morality too much favoured by the tendencies of England. He has thrown light upon the mystery of conscience. He has offered a subtle method of harmonizing philosophic liberty with philosophic necessity. He has done justice, when all men were determinately unjust, to the leading Schoolmen,—to Aquinas, to Ockham, to Biel, to Scotus, and in more modern times to Soto and Suarez. To his own contemporaries he is not just only, but generous, as in the spirit of one who wishes to make amends for the past injustice of others. He is full of information and suggestion upon every topic which he treats. Few men have so much combined the power of judging wisely from a stationary position with the power of changing that station under changing circumstances in the age or in the subject. He moves slowly, or with velocity, as he moves amongst breakers, or amongst open seas. And upon every theme which he treats, in proportion as it rises in importance, the reader is sure of finding displayed the accomplishments of a scholar, the philosophic resources of a very original thinker, the elegance of a rhetorician, and the large sagacity of a statesman controlled by the most sceptical caution of a lawyer.

MIRACLES AS SUBJECTS OF TESTIMONY[1]

HUME'S argument against miracles is simply this :—Every possible event, however various in its degree of credibility, must of necessity be more credible when it rests upon a sufficient cause lying within the field of what is called *nature* than when it does not,—more credible when it obeys some mechanical cause than when it transcends such a cause and is miraculous.

Therefore, assume the resistance to credibility in any preternatural occurrence as equal to x, and the very ideal or possible value of human testimony as no more than x: in that case, under the most favourable circumstances conceivable, the argument for and against a miracle, $+x$ and $-x$, will be equal; the two values will destroy each other; and the result will be $= 0$.

But, inasmuch as this expresses the value of human testimony in its highest or ideal form,—a form which is seldom realized in experience,—the true result will be different: there will always be a negative result, much or little according to circumstances, but in any case enough to turn the balance *against* believing a miracle.

"Or, in other words," said Hume, popularizing his argument, "it will always be more credible that the reporter of a miracle should have told a falsehood, or should himself have been the dupe of appearances, than that a miracle should have actually occurred,—that is, an infraction of those natural laws (any or all) which limit what we call experience. For, assume the utmost disinterestedness, veracity,

[1] Printed first in *Blackwood* for July 1839: reprinted by De Quincey in 1858, in Vol. VIII of his Collected Writings.—M.

and sound judgment in the witness, with the utmost advantage in the circumstances for giving full play to those qualities; even in such a case the value of affirmative testimony could, at the very utmost, be equal to the negative value on the other side of the equation: and the result would be to keep my faith suspended *in equilibrio*. But, in any real case ever likely to come before us, the result will be worse; for the affirmative testimony will be sure to fall in many ways below its ideal maximum,—leaving, therefore, for the final result some excess, much or little, to the negative side of the equation." [1]

Section II

Of the Argument as affected by the Covert Limitations under which it is presented

Such is the argument; and, as the first step towards investigating its sanity and its strength, its kind of force and its quantity of force, we must direct our attention to the following fact: viz. that, amongst three separate conditions under which a miracle (or any event whatever) might become known to us, Hume's argument is applied only to one. Assuming a miracle to happen (for the possibility of a miracle is of course left open throughout the discussion, since any argument against *that* would at once foreclose every question about its communicability), then it might happen under three several sets of circumstances, in relation to our consciousness. 1. It might happen in the presence of a single witness,—that witness not being ourselves. This case let us call *Alpha*. 2. It might happen in the presence of many witnesses,—witnesses to a variable amount, but still (as before) ourselves not being amongst that multitude. This case let us call *Beta*. 3. It might happen in our own presence, and fall within the direct light of our own consciousness. This case let us call *Gamma*.

Now, these distinctions are important to the whole extent

[1] This paragraph, though printed within quotation-marks, is not an actual quotation from Hume, but only an expression of Hume's argument in De Quincey's own words.—M.

of the question. For the second case, which is the actual case of many miracles recorded in the New Testament, at once cuts away a large body of sources in which either error or deceit could lurk. Hume's argument supposes the reporter of the miracle to be a dupe, or the maker of dupes—himself deluded, or wishing to delude others. But, in the case of the thousands fed from a few loaves and small fishes, the chances of error, wilful or not wilful, are diminished in proportion to the number of observers,[1] and Hume's inference as to the declension of the affirmative x, in relation to the negative x, no longer applies, or, if at all, with vastly diminished force. With respect to the third case, it cuts away the whole argument at once in its very radix. For Hume's argument applies to the *communication* of a miracle, and therefore to a case of testimony. But, wherever the miracle falls within direct personal cognisance, there it follows that no question can arise about the value of human testimony. The affirmative x, expressing the value of testimony, disappears altogether; and that side of the equation is possessed by a new quantity (viz. a quantity representing ourselves—our own consciousness), not at all concerned in Hume's argument.

Hence it results that, of three possible conditions under which a miracle may be supposed to offer itself to our knowledge, two are excluded from the view of Hume's argument.

Section III

Whether the Second of these Conditions is not Expressly Noticed by Hume

It may seem that it *is*. But in fact it is not. And (what is more to the purpose) we are not at liberty to consider it

[1] "*In proportion to the number of observers*":—Perhaps, however, on the part of Hume, some critical apologist will say, "Doubtless he was aware of that; but still the reporters of the miracle were few. No matter how many were present, the witnesses for us are but the Evangelists." Yes, certainly, the Evangelists; and, let us add, all those contemporaries to whom the Evangelists silently appealed. These make up the "multitude" contemplated in the case *Beta*.

any accident that it is not. Hume had his reasons. Let us take all in proper order: 1, that it seems so; 2, that in fact it is not so; and 3, that this is no accident, but intentional.

1. Hume seems to contemplate such a case—viz. *Beta*, the case of a miracle witnessed and attested by a multitude of persons—in the following imaginary miracle, which he proposes as a basis for reasoning. Queen Elizabeth, as everybody will remember who has happened to read Lord Monmouth's Memoirs, died on the night between the last day of 1602 and the first day of 1603[1]: this could not be forgotten by the reader, because, in fact, Lord Monmouth, who was one of Her Majesty's nearest relatives (being a younger son of her first cousin Lord Hunsdon), obtained his title and subsequent preferment as a reward for the furious ride he performed to Edinburgh (at that time at least 440 miles distant from London) without taking off his boots, in order to lay the earliest tidings of the great event at the feet of her successor. In reality, never did any death cause so much posting day and night over the high-roads of Europe. And the same causes which made it so interesting have caused it to be the best dated event in modern history,—that one which could least be shaken by any discordant evidence still in arrear. Now, says Hume, imagine the case that, in spite of all this chronological precision—this precision, and this notoriety of precision—her Majesty's court physicians should have chosen to propagate a story of her resurrection. Imagine that these learned gentlemen should have issued a *bulletin*

[1] *i.e.* ecclesiastically: the queen died on the night of March 24, in the year which we should *now* (1858) call 1603, but which by every class of careful writers was *then* regarded as 1602. March 24 was the last day of 1602: for *Lady-Day*, or the day of our Lady the Virgin Mary (the day which corresponds by anticipation with December 25, or Christmas Day, so as to allow nine months for the gestation of the Holy Child), is not a *moveable* festival, but fixed unalterably to March 25. This was the opening day, the *Jour de l'An* of Paris, the New-year's-day of England, for the year 1603. And all the days which lie between December 31 of 1602 and March 25 of 1603 were written as a fraction—viz. February 10, $\frac{1602}{1603}$, where the denominator expresses the true year, according to our present mode of reckoning. But the reader must understand that this has nothing to do with O. S. (*Old Style*) and N. S. (*New Style*). It simply expresses the ecclesiastic way of counting, opposed to the civil.

declaring that Queen Elizabeth had been met in Greenwich Park, or at Nonsuch, on May-day of 1603, or in Westminster two years after, by the Lord Chamberlain when detecting Guy Faux; let them even swear it before twenty justices of the peace: I for one, says Hume, am free to confess that I would not believe them. No, nor, to say the truth, would I; nor would I advise my readers to believe them.

2. Here, therefore, it would seem as if Hume were boldly pressing his principles to the very uttermost,—that is, were charging a miracle as untenable, though attested by a multitude. But, in fact, he is not. He only seems to do so; for, if no number of witnesses could avail anything in proof of a miracle, why does he timidly confine himself to the hypothesis of the queen's physicians only coming forward? Why not call in the whole Privy Council—or the Lord Mayor and Common Council of London, the Sheriffs of Middlesex, and the Twelve Judges? As to the court physicians, though three or four nominally, virtually they are but one man. They have a common interest, and in two separate ways they are liable to a suspicion of collusion: first, because the same motives which act upon one probably act upon the rest: in this respect, they are under a *common* influence. Secondly, because, if not the motives, at any rate the physicians themselves, act upon each other. In this respect, they are under a *reciprocal* influence. They are to be reasoned about as one individual.

3. As Hume could not possibly fail to see all this, we may be sure that his choice of witnesses was not accidental. In fact, his apparent carelessness marks a very discreet management. His object was, under the fiction of an independent multitude, to smuggle in a virtual unity; for his court physicians are no plural body in effect and virtue, but a mere pleonasm and a tautology.

And, in good earnest, Hume had reason enough for his caution. How much or how little testimony would avail to establish a resurrection in any neutral case[1] few people

[1] By a neutral case is meant, 1st, one in which there is no previous reason, from a great doctrine requiring such an event for its support, to expect a resurrection, 2dly, a case belonging to a period of time in which it is fully believed that miraculous agency has ceased.

would be willing to pronounce off-hand, and, above all, on a fictitious case. Prudent men, in such circumstances, would act as the judges in our English courts, who are always displeased if it is attempted to elicit their opinions upon a point of law by an imaginary and collusive case. And very reasonably; for in these fictitious cases all the little circumstances of reality are wanting, and therefore the oblique relations to such circumstances out of which it is that any sound opinion can be formed. We all know very well what Hume is after in this problem of a resurrection. And, his case of Queen Elizabeth's resurrection being a perfectly fictitious case, we are at liberty to do any one of three different things:—either simply to refuse an answer; or, 2dly, to give such an answer as he looks for,—viz. to agree with him in his disbelief under the supposed contingency,—without, therefore, offering the slightest prejudice to any scriptural case of resurrection: *i.e.* we might go along with him in his premises, and yet baulk him of his purpose; or, 3dly, we might even join issue with him, and peremptorily challenge his verdict upon his own fiction. For it is singular enough that a modern mathematician of eminence (Mr. Babbage) has expressly considered this very imaginary question of a resurrection, and he pronounces the testimony of *seven* witnesses, competent and veracious, and presumed to have no bias, sufficient to establish such a miracle. Strip Hume's case of the ambiguities already pointed out—suppose the physicians *really* and virtually, as well as speciously and nominally, independent witnesses—not a corporation speaking by one organ—it will then become a mere question of degree between the philosopher and the mathematician—seven witnesses? or fifty? or a hundred? For, though none of us (not Mr. Babbage, we may be sure) seriously believes in the possibility of a resurrection occurring in these days, as little can any of us believe in the possibility that seven witnesses of honour and sagacity (but say seven hundred) could be found to attest such an event when not occurring.

But the useful result from all this is that Mr. Hume is perfectly aware of the case *Beta* (of last sect.), as a distinct case from *Alpha* or from *Gamma*, though he affects blind-

ness : he is aware that a multitude of competent witnesses, no matter whether seven or seven hundred, is able to establish that which a single witness could not ; in fact, that increasing the number of witnesses is able to compensate increasing incredibility in the subject of doubt ; that, even supposing this subject a resurrection from the dead, there may be assigned a quantity of evidence (x) greater than *any* resistance to the credibility. And he betrays the fact that he has one eye open to his own jesuitism by palming upon us an apparent multitude for a real one, thus drawing all the credit he can from the name of a multitude, and yet evading the force which he strictly knew to be lodged in the thing ; seeking the reputation of the case *Beta*, but shrinking from its hostile force.

Section IV

Of the Argument as affected by a Classification of Miracles

Let us now inquire whether Hume's argument would be affected by such differences in miracles as might emerge upon the most general distribution of their kinds.

Miracles may be classed generally as inner or outer.

1. The inner, or those which may be called miracles for the individual, are such as go on, or may go on, within the separate personal consciousness of each separate man. And it shows how forgetful people are of the very doctrines which they themselves profess as Christians, when we consider, on the one hand, that miracles, in this sense, are essential to Christianity, and yet, on the other hand, consider how often it is said that the age of miracles is past. Doubtless, in the sense of external miracles, all such agencies *are* past. But in the other sense there are three distinct classes of the supernatural agency which we are now considering : and these three are held by many Christians ; two by most Christians ; and the third by all. They are

α.—*Special Providences :* which class it is that many philosophic Christians doubt or deny.

β.—*Grace:* both predisposing (by old theologians called *prevenient* [1]) and effectual.

γ.—*Prayer considered as efficacious.*

Of these three I repeat that the two last are held by most Christians; and yet it is evident that both presume a supernatural agency. But this agency exists only where it is sought. And, even where it *does* exist, from its very nature (as an *interior* experience for each separate consciousness) it is incommunicable. But that does not defeat its purpose. It is of its essence to be incommunicable. And, therefore, with relation to Hume's great argument, which was designed to point out a vast *hiatus* or inconsistency in the divine economy—"Here is a miraculous agency, perhaps, but it is incommunicable: it may exist, but it cannot manifest itself; which defect neutralises it, and defeats the very purpose of its existence"—the answer is that, as respects these interior miracles, there is no such inconsistency. They are *meant* for the private forum of each man's consciousness: nor would it have met any human necessity to have made them communicable. The language of Scripture is that he who wishes experimentally to know the changes that may be accomplished by prayer must pray. In that way only, and not by communication of knowledge from another, could he

[1] "*Prevenient grace*":—Memorable it is, and striking as a record of the changes worked continually by time, that, in a trial before one of our English Ecclesiastical Courts some two or three years ago (the parties to the suit being, on the one side, as I think, the Bishop of Exeter, and on the other a reverend gentleman of whom the solitary wreck or floating spar that remains in the custody of my recollection is a capital A, as the initial letter of his name), the technical term "*prevenient grace*" came forward many a score of times. But how completely this was felt to be a resurrection from the grave may be judged by the declaration of a leading counsel, a most eminent barrister, who protested against the mysterious phrase as one which, in the whole course of his reading (some little being *sacred*, but a great deal *profane*), he had never once met (or heard of) such a monster:—was it something to drink? or was it something that one would give in charge to a policeman? Now, reader, look into the eleventh book of "Paradise Lost," and you will find it within the first four or five lines. To be available for the purposes of a great poet, the phrase must have been common at that day (1667); and in every theological work it is as common as the songs of birds in spring.

understand it as a practical effect. And to understand it not practically, but only in a speculative way, could not meet any religious end, but merely an irreligious curiosity.

As respects one great division of miraculous agency, it is clear, therefore, that Hume's argument does not apply. The arrow glances past: not so much missing its aim as taking a false one. The failure is not in the executive hand, but in the guiding eye. The *hiatus* which it supposes, the insulation and incommunicability which it charges upon the miraculous as a capital oversight, was part of the design: such mysterious agencies were *intended* to be incommunicable, and for the same reason which shuts up each man's consciousness into a silent world of its own, separate and inaccessible to all other consciousnesses. If a communication is thrown open by such agencies between the separate spirit of each man and the supreme Spirit of the Universe, then the end is accomplished: and it is part of that end to close this communication against all other cognisance. So far Hume is baffled. The supernatural agency is incommunicable: it ought to be so. That is its perfection.

2. But now, as respects the other great order of miracles —viz. the *external*—first of all, we may remark a very important subdivision. Miracles, in this sense, subdivide into two great leading varieties — 1. *Evidential* miracles, which simply *prove* Christianity; 2. *Constituent* miracles, which, in a partial sense, *are* Christianity, as in part composing its substance. And, perhaps, it may turn out that Hume's objection, if applicable at all, is here applicable in a separate way, and with a varying force.

The first class, the evidential miracles, are all those which were performed merely as evidences (whether simply as indications, or as absolute demonstrations) of the divine power which upheld Christianity. The second class, the constituent miracles, are those which constitute a part of Christianity. Two of these are absolutely indispensable to Christianity, and cannot be separated from it even in thought —viz. the miraculous birth of our Saviour, and his miraculous resurrection. The first is essential upon this ground— that, unless Christ had united the two natures (divine and human), he could not have made the satisfaction required.

For try it both ways. Not being human, then, indeed, he might have had power to go through the mysterious sufferings of the satisfaction; but how would that have applied to man? It would have been perfect, but how would it have been relevant? Now, try it the other way: not being divine, then indeed any satisfaction he could make would be relevant; but how would it have been possible in a being himself tainted with frailty? It is an argument used by Christianity itself—that man cannot offer a satisfaction for man. The mysterious and supernatural birth, therefore, was essential, as a capacitation for the work to be performed; and, on the other hand, the mysterious death and consequences were essential, as the very work itself.

Now, therefore, having made this distinction, I may observe that the first class of miracles was occasional and polemic: it was meant to meet a special hostility incident to the birth-struggles of a new religion, and a religion which, for the very reason that it was true, stood opposed to the spirit of the world; of a religion which, in its first stage, had to fight against a civil power in absolute possession of the civilised earth, and backed by seventy legions. This being settled, it follows that, if Hume's argument were applicable in its whole strength to the evidential miracles, no result of any importance could follow. It is clear that a Christianised earth never can want polemic miracles again; polemic miracles were wanted for a transitional state, but such a state cannot return. Polemic miracles were wanted for a state of conflict with a dominant idolatry. It was Christianity militant, and militant with child-like arms, against Paganism triumphant, that needed such weapons, and that used them. But Christianity in league with civilisation, and resting on the powers of this earth allied with her own, never again can speak to idolatrous man except from a station of infinite superiority. If, therefore, these evidential miracles are incommunicable as respects their grounds of credibility to after generations, neither are they wanted.

Still it will be urged—Were not the miracles meant for purposes ulterior to the transitional state? Were they not meant equally for the polemic purpose of confuting hostility at the moment and of propping the faith of Christians in all

after ages? The growing opinion amongst reflecting Christians is that they were not: that the evidential miracles accomplished their whole purpose in their own age. Something of supernatural agency, visibly displayed, was wanted for the first establishment of a new faith. But, once established, it must be a false faith that could need this external support—the evidential miracles, the polemic credentials of Christianity. Christianity could not unroot itself now, though every trace of evidential miracle should have vanished. Being a true religion, once rooted in man's knowledge and man's heart, it is self-sustained; it never could be eradicated.

But, waiving that argument, it is evident that, whatever becomes of the evidential miracles, Christianity never can dispense with those transcendent miracles which I have called *constituent*,—those which do not so much demonstrate Christianity as constitute Christianity, and *are* Christianity by a large integral section. Now, as to the way in which Hume's argument could apply to these, I shall reserve what I have to say until a subsequent section. Meantime, with respect to the other class, the simply evidential miracles, it is plain that, if ever they should be called for again, then, as to *them*, Hume's argument will be evaded, or not evaded, according to their purpose. If their function regards an individual, it will be no just objection to them that they are incommunicable. If it regards a multitude or a nation, then the same power which utters the miracle can avail for its manifestation before a multitude, as happened in the days of the New Testament; *and then is realised the case* Beta *of Sect. II.* And, if it is still objected that even in that case there could be no sufficient way of propagating the miracle, with its evidence, to other times or places, the answer must be—

1. That, supposing the purpose merely polemic, that purpose is answered without such a propagation.

2. That, supposing the purpose, by possibility, an ulterior purpose, stretching into distant ages, even then our modern arts of civilisation, printing, &c., give us advantages which place a remote age on a level with the present as to the force of evidence; and that even the defect of *autopsy* may be compensated by sufficient testimony of a multitude it is

evident that Hume himself felt, by his evasion in the case of the imaginary Elizabethan miracle proposed by himself.

RECAPITULATION

Now let us recapitulate the steps already made, before going on to the rest.

1. I have drawn into notice (Sect. II) the case *Beta*—overlooked by Hume in his argument, but apparently not overlooked in his consciousness—the case where a multitude of witnesses overrules the incommunicability attaching to a single witness.

2. I have drawn into notice the class of internal miracles —miracles going on in the inner economy of every Christian's heart; for it is essential to a Christian to allow of prayer. He cannot *be* a Christian if he should condemn prayer; and prayer cannot hope to produce its object without a miracle. And to such miracles Hume's argument, the argument of incommunicability, is inapplicable. They do not seek to transplant themselves: every man's personal experience in this respect is meant for himself alone.

3. Even amongst miracles *not* internal, I have shown that, if one class (the merely evidential and polemic) are incommunicable—*i.e.* not capable of propagation to a remote age or place—they have sufficiently fulfilled their ultimate purpose by their immediate effect. But such miracles are alien and accidental to Christianity. Christ himself reproved severely those who sought such signs, as a wicked, unbelieving generation; and afterwards he reproved, with a most pathetic reproach, that one of his own disciples who singly, amongst the total brotherhood, demanded such a sign. But, besides these evidential miracles, I noticed also

4. The constituent miracles of Christianity; upon which, as regarded Hume's argument, I reserved my remarks to the latter section: and to these I now address myself.

But first I premise this

Lemma:—That an *a priori* (or, as I shall attempt to show, an *a posteriori*) reason for believing a miracle, or for expecting a miracle, will greatly disturb the valuation of x (that is, the abstract resistance to credibility) as assumed in

Hume's argument. This is the centre in which, I am satisfied, lurks that πρωτον ψευδος, or primary falsehood, which Hume himself suspected: and I add that, as a vast number of witnesses (according to a remark made in Section II) will virtually operate as a reduction of the value allowed to x, until x may be made to vanish altogether, so, in the reverse order, any material reduction of value in x will virtually operate exactly as the multiplication of witnesses, and the case *Alpha* will be raised to the case *Beta*.

This *Lemma* being stated as a point of appeal in what follows, I proceed to

Section V

On Hume's Argument as affected by the Purpose

This topic is so impressive, and indeed awful, in its relation to Christianity, that I shall not violate its majesty by doing more than simply stating the case. All the known or imagined miracles that ever were recorded as flowing from any Pagan origin were miracles—1, of ostentation; 2, of ambition and rivalship; 3, were blank expressions of power; or, 4, were blind accidents. Not even in pretence was any one of them more than that. First and last came the Christian miracles on behalf of a *moral* purpose. The purpose was to change man's idea of his own nature, and to change his idea of God's nature. Many other purposes might be stated; but all were moral. Now, to any other wielder of supernatural power, real or imaginary, it never had occurred, by way of pretence even, that in working miracles he had a moral object. And here, indeed, comes in the argument of Christ with tremendous effect—that, whilst all other miracles might be liable to the suspicion of having been effected by alliance with darker agencies, his only (as sublime moral agencies for working the only revolution that ever was worked in man's nature) could not be liable to such a suspicion; since, if an evil spirit would lend himself to the propagation of good in its most transcendent form, in that case the kingdom of darkness would be "divided against itself."

Here, then, is an *a posteriori* reason, derived from the whole subsequent life and death of the miracle-worker, for diminishing the value of x according to the *Lemma*.

Section VI

On the Argument of Hume as affected by Matters of Fact

It is a very important axiom of the schoolmen, applicable to this case—that, *a posse ad esse non valet consequentia* ; you can draw no inference from the possibility of a thing to its reality : but, in the reverse order, *ab esse ad posse*, the inference is inevitable ; if it is, or if it ever has been—then of necessity it can be. Hume himself would have admitted that the proof of any one miracle, beyond all possibility of doubt, at once lowered the $-x$ of his argument (*i.e.* the value of the resistance to our faith), so as to affect the whole force of that argument, as applying to all other miracles whatever having a rational and an adequate purpose. Now, it happens that we have two cases of miracles which can be urged in this view : one *a posteriori*, derived from our historical experience ; and the other *a priori*. We will take them separately.

1. The *a priori* miracle I call such—not (as the unphilosophic may suppose) because it occurred previously to our own period, or from any consideration of time whatever, but in the logical meaning, as having been derived from our reason in opposition to our experience. This order of miracle it is manifest that Hume overlooked altogether, because he says expressly that we have nothing to appeal to in this dispute except our human experience. But it happens that we have ; and precisely where the possibilities of experience desert us. We know nothing through experience (whether directly personal or historical) of what preceded or accompanied the first introduction of man upon this earth. But, in the absence of all experience, our reason informs us that he must have been introduced by a supernatural agency. Thus far we are sure. For the sole alternative is one which would be equally mysterious, and, besides, contradictory to the marks of change, of transition,

and of perishableness in our planet itself—viz. the hypothesis of an eternal, unoriginated race: *that* is more confounding to the human intellect than any miracle whatever; so that, even tried merely as one probability against another, the miracle would have the advantage. The miracle supposes a supersensual and transcendent cause. The opposite hypothesis supposes effects without *any* cause; in short, upon any hypothesis, we are driven to suppose—and compelled to suppose—a miraculous state as introductory to the earliest state of nature. The planet, indeed, might form itself by mechanical laws of motion, repulsion, attraction, and central forces. But man could not. Life could not. Organisation, even animal organisation, might perhaps be explained out of mechanical causes. But life could not. Life is itself a great miracle. Suppose the nostrils formed by mechanic agency; still the breath of life could not enter them without a supernatural force. And, *a fortiori*, man, with his intellectual and moral capacities, could not arise upon this planet without a higher agency than any lodged in that nature which is the object of our present experience. This kind of miracle, as deduced by our reason, and not witnessed experimentally, or drawn from any past records, I call an *a priori* miracle.

2. But there is another kind of miracle, which Hume ought not to have overlooked, which he has, however, overlooked. He himself observes candidly that *prophecy* is a distinct species of the miraculous; and, no doubt, he neglected the Scriptural Prophecies, as supposing them all of doubtful interpretation, or else believing, with Porphyry, that such as are not doubtful must have been posterior to the event which they point to. It happens, however, that there are some prophecies which cannot be evaded or "refused,"—some to which neither objection will apply. One I will here cite, by way of example. The prophecy of Isaiah describing the desolation of Babylon was delivered about seven centuries before Christ. A century or so *after* Christ comes Porphyry, and insinuates that all the prophecies alike might be comparatively recent forgeries! Well, for a moment suppose it: but, at least, they existed in the days of Porphyry. Now, it happens that, more than two centuries *after* Porphyry, we have good evidence, as to

Babylon, that it had not yet reached the stage of utter desolation predicted by Isaiah. Four centuries after Christ, we learn from a father of the Christian Church, who had good personal information as to its condition, that it was then become a solitude, but a solitude in good preservation as a royal park. The vast city had disappeared, and the murmur of myriads; but as yet there were no signs whatever of ruin or desolation. Not until our own nineteenth century was the picture of Isaiah seen in full realisation: then lay the lion basking at noonday; then crawled the serpents from their holes; and at night the whole region echoed with the wild cries peculiar to arid wildernesses. The transformations, therefore, of Babylon have been going on slowly through a vast number of centuries, until the perfect accomplishment of Isaiah's picture. Perhaps they have travelled through a course of more than two thousand years; and, from the glimpses we gain of Babylon at intervals, we know for certain that Isaiah had been dead for many centuries before his vision could have even *begun* to realise itself. But then, says an objector, the final ruins of great empires and cities may be safely assumed on general grounds of observation. Hardly, however, if they happen to be seated in a region so fertile as Mesopotamia, and on a great river like the Euphrates. But allow this possibility —allow the natural disappearance of Babylon in a long course of centuries. In other cases the disappearance is gradual, and at length perfect. No traces can now be found of Carthage; none of Memphis; or, if you suppose something peculiar to Mesopotamia, no traces can be found of Nineveh,[1] or on the other side of that region; none of the other great cities—Roman, Parthian, Persian, Median, in that same region or adjacent regions. Babylon only is circumstantially described by Jewish prophecy as long surviving itself in a state of visible and audible desolation: and to Babylon only such a description applies. Other prophecies might be cited with the same result. But this is enough. And here is an *a posteriori* miracle.

Now, observe: these two orders of miracle, by their very nature, absolutely evade the argument of Hume. The

[1] Of late, however, fully exposed by Layard, Rawlinson, &c.

incommunicability disappears altogether. The value of $-x$ absolutely vanishes, and becomes $= 0$. The human reason, being immutable, suggests to every age, renews and regenerates for ever, the necessary inference of a miraculous state antecedent to the natural state. And, for the miracles of prophecy, these require no evidence, and depend upon none: they carry their own evidence along with them; they utter their own testimonies, and they are continually reinforcing them; for, probably, every successive period of time reproduces fresh cases of prophecy completed. But even one, like that of Babylon, realises the case of *Beta* (Sect. II) in its most perfect form. History, which attests it, is the voice of every generation, checked and countersigned in effect by all the men who compose it.

Section VII

Of the Argument as affected by the particular Worker of the Miracles

This is the last "moment," to use the language of Mechanics, which I shall notice in this discussion. And here there is a remarkable *petitio principii* in Hume's management of his argument. He says, roundly, that it makes no difference at all if God were connected with the question as the author of the supposed miracles. And why? Because, says he, we know God only by experience—meaning as involved in nature—and, therefore, that in so far as miracles transcend our experience of nature, they transcend by implication our experience of God. But the very question under discussion is—whether God did, or did not, manifest himself to human experience in the miracles of the New Testament. Yet, at all events, the idea of God in itself already includes the notion of a *power* to work miracles, whether that power were ever exercised or not; and, as Sir Isaac Newton thought that space might be the sensorium of God, so may we (and with much more philosophical propriety) affirm that the miraculous and the transcendent is the very *nature* of God. God being assumed, it is as easy to believe in a miracle issuing from him as in any operation

according to the laws of nature (which, after all, is possibly in many points only the nature of our planet): it is as easy, because either mode of action is indifferent to him. Doubtless this argument, when addressed to an atheist, loses its force, because he refuses to assume a God. But, then, on the other hand, it must be remembered that Hume's argument itself does not stand on the footing of atheism. He supposes it binding on a theist. Now, a theist, in starting from the idea of God, grants, of necessity, the plenary power of miracles as greater and more awful than man could even comprehend. All he wants is a sufficient motive for such transcendent agencies; but this is supplied in excess (as regards what we have called the *constituent* miracles of Christianity) by the case of a religion that was to revolutionise the moral nature of man. The moral nature—the kingdom of the will—is essentially opposed to the kingdom of nature, even by the confession of irreligious philosophers; and, therefore, being itself a supersensual field, it seems more reasonably adapted to agencies supernatural than such as are natural.

GENERAL RECAPITULATION

In Hume's argument $-x$, which expresses the resistance to credibility in a miracle, is valued as of necessity equal to the very maximum or ideal of human testimony; which, under the very best of circumstances, might be equal to $+x$, in no case more, and in all known cases less. I, on the other hand, have endeavoured to show—

1. That, because Hume contemplates only the case of a single witness, it will happen that the case *Beta* (of Sect. II), where a multitude of witnesses exist, may greatly exceed $+x$, and with a sufficient multitude *must* exceed x.

2. That, in the case of internal miracles—operations of divine agency within the mind and conscience of the individual—Hume's argument is necessarily set aside: the evidence, the $+x$, is perfect for the individual, and the miraculous agency is meant only for *him*.

3. That, in the case of one primary miracle—viz. the first organisation of man on this planet—the evidence

greatly transcends x: because here it is an evidence not derived from experience at all, but from the reflecting reason; and the miracle has the same advantage over facts of experience that a mathematical truth has over the truths which rest on induction. It is the difference between *must be* and *is*—between the inevitable and the merely actual.

4. That, in the case of another order of miracles—viz. prophecies—Hume's argument is again overruled; because the $+ x$ in this case, the affirmative evidence, is not derived from human testimony. Some prophecies are obscure; they may be fulfilled possibly without men's being aware of the fulfilment. But others, as that about the fate of Babylon—about the fate of the Arabs (the children of Ishmael)—about the fate of the Jews—are not of a nature to be misunderstood; and the evidence which attends them is not alien, but is intrinsic, and developed by themselves (a contingency for which Hume has made no allowance) in successive stages from age to age.

5. That, because the primary miracle in No. 3 argues at least a *power* competent to the working of a miracle, for any after miracle we have only to seek a sufficient *motive*. Now, the objects of the Christian revelation were equal at the least to those of the original creation. In fact, Christianity may be considered as a second creation; and the justifying cause for the *constituent* miracles of Christianity is even to us as apparent as any which could have operated at the primary creation. The *epigenesis*, the secondary birth, was, at least, as grand an occasion as the *genesis*, the original birth. Indeed, it is evident, for example, that Christianity itself could not have existed without the constituent miracle of the Resurrection; because without that there would have been no conquest over death. And here, as in No. 3, $+x$ is derived—not from any experience, and therefore cannot be controlled by that sort of hostile experience which Hume's argument relies on; but is derived from the reason which transcends all experience; that is, which would be valid, I do not say against the positive case of a hostile experience, but in the neutral or negative case, where all confirmatory experience is wanting.

POSTSCRIPT [1]

In the little paper on "Miracles" the reader who is new to the subject must understand that no question is raised (as too probably he will be supposing) on the possibility of a miracle. That question is left entirely untouched. The discussion commences at a point lower down: viz. after assuming the possibility of a miracle, then next as to its *communicability*,—meaning whether a miracle, if it should actually take place, could have any power to propagate its own existence amongst mankind,—that is, whether it could translate itself upon the wings of *testimony* from the little theatre of spectators or auditors before whom it had been exhibited to the great theatre of the world and the still greater theatre of posterity.

[1] What is here printed as a "Postscript" appeared originally as a paragraph in De Quincey's "Preface" to the volume of his Collected Writings containing the reprint of his paper on Miracles. The date of the paper itself was 1839; that of the reprint of it, and of this postscript, was 1858.—M.

JUDAS ISCARIOT[1]

EVERYTHING connected with our ordinary conceptions of this man, of his real purposes, and of his scriptural doom, apparently is erroneous. Not one thing, but all things, must rank as false which traditionally we accept about him. That neither any motive of his, nor any ruling impulse, was tainted with the vulgar treachery imputed to him appears probable from the strength of his remorse. And this view of his case comes recommended by so much of internal plausibility that in Germany it has long since shaped itself into the following distinct hypothesis :—Judas Iscariot, it is alleged, participated in the common delusion of the Apostles as to that earthly kingdom which, under the sanction and auspices of Christ, they supposed to be waiting and ripening for the Jewish people. So far there was nothing in Judas to warrant any special wonder or any separate blame. If *he* erred, so did the other Apostles. But in one point Judas went further than his brethren—viz. in speculating upon the *reasons* of Christ for delaying the inauguration of this kingdom. All things were apparently ripe for it ; all things pointed to it : viz. the expectation and languishing desires of

[1] Published by De Quincey in 1857 in the seventh volume of his Collective Writings : where printed before, if anywhere, I have not been able to ascertain ; neither has the American editor.—The speculation which forms the substance of the essay had been previously broached not only by German theologians, as De Quincey informs his readers, but also, I believe, by Archbishop Whately, in one or other of his many writings.—M.

many Hebrew saints; the warning from signs; the prophetic alarms propagated by heralds like the Baptist; the mysterious interchange of kindling signals rising suddenly out of darkness, as secret words between distant parties—secret question, or secret answer; the fermentation of revolutionary doctrines all over Judea; the passionate impatience of the Roman yoke; the continual openings of new convulsions at the great centre of Rome; the insurrectionary temper of Jewish society, as indicated by the continual rise of robber leaders that drew off multitudes into the neighbouring deserts; and, universally, the unsettled mind of the Jewish nation, their deep unrest, and the anarchy of their expectations. These explosive materials had long been accumulated; they needed only a kindling spark. Heavenly citations to war, divine summonses to resistance, had long been read in the insults and aggressions of Paganism; there wanted only a leader. And such a leader, if he would but consent to assume that office, stood ready in the founder of Christianity. The supreme qualifications for leadership manifested and emblazoned in the person of Jesus Christ were evident to *all* parties in the Jewish community, and not merely to the religious body of his own immediate followers. These qualifications were published and expounded to the world in the facility with which everywhere he drew crowds about himself,[1] in the extraordinary depth of impres-

[1] "*Drew crowds about himself*":—As connected with these crowds I have elsewhere noticed, many years ago, the secret reason which probably governed our Saviour in cultivating the character and functions of a *hakim* or physician. Throughout the whole world of civilisation at that era (*ἡ οἰκουμενη*), whatever might be otherwise the varieties of the government, there was amongst the ruling authorities a great jealousy of mobs and popular gatherings. To a grand revolutionary teacher no obstacle so fatal as this initial prejudice could have offered itself. Already, in the *first* place, a new and mysterious body of truth, having vast and illimitable relations to human duties and prospects, presented a field of indefinite alarm. That this truth should, in the *second* place, publish itself, not through books and written discourses, but orally, by word of mouth, and by personal communication between vast mobs and the divine teacher—already *that*, as furnishing a handle of influence to a mob-leader, justified a preliminary alarm. But then, *thirdly*, as furnishing a plea for bringing crowds together, such a mode of teaching must have crowned the suspicious presumptions against itself. One peril there was at any

sion which attended his teaching, and in the fear as well as hatred which possessed the Jewish rulers against him. Indeed, so great was this fear, so great was this hatred, that, had it not been for the predominance of the Roman element in the government of Judea, it is pretty certain that Christ would have been crushed in an earlier stage of his career.

Believing, therefore, as Judas did, and perhaps had reason to do, that Christ contemplated the establishment of a temporal kingdom—the restoration, in fact, of David's throne; believing also that all the conditions towards the realisation of such a scheme met and centred in the person of Christ: what was it that, upon any solution intelligible to Judas, neutralised so grand a scheme of promise? Simply and obviously, to a man with the views of Judas, it was the character of Christ himself, sublimely over-gifted for purposes of speculation, but, like Shakspere's great creation of Prince Hamlet, not correspondingly endowed for the business of action and the clamorous emergencies of life. Indecision and doubt (such was the interpretation of Judas) crept over the faculties of the Divine Man as often as he was summoned away from his own natural Sabbath of heavenly contemplation to the gross necessities of action. It became important, therefore, according to the views adopted by Judas, that his master should be *precipitated* into action by a force from without, and thrown into the centre of some popular movement, such as, once beginning to revolve, could not afterwards be suspended or checked. Christ must be *compromised* before doubts could have time to form. It is by no means improbable that this may have been the theory of Judas. Nor is it at all necessary to seek for the justification of such a theory, considered as a matter of prudential policy, in Jewish

rate to begin with — the peril of a mob: *that* was certain. And, secondly, there was the doctrine taught: which doctrine was mysterious; and in that uncertainty lay another peril. Thirdly, beside the *opening* to a mob interest, there was a mob connexion actually formed. So that, equally through what was fixed and what was doubtful, there arose that "fear of change" which "perplexes monarchs." [The reference in the beginning of this footnote seems to be to a passage in De Quincey's paper on the Essenes. See *ante*, Vol. VII, pp. 159-161. —M.]

fanaticism. The Jews of that day were distracted by internal schisms. Else, and with any benefit from national unity, the headlong rapture of Jewish zeal, when combined in vindication of their insulted temple and temple-worship, would have been equal to the effort of dislodging the Roman legionary force *for the moment* from the military possession of Palestine. After which, although the restoration of the Roman supremacy could not ultimately have been evaded, it is by no means certain that a *temperamentum* or reciprocal scheme of concessions might not have been welcome at Rome, such as had, in fact, existed under Herod the Great and his father.[1] The radical power, under such a scheme, would have been lodged in Rome; but with such external concessions to Jewish nationality as might have consulted the real interests of both parties. Administered under Jewish names, the land would have yielded a larger revenue than, as a refractory nest of insurgents, it ever *did* yield to the Roman exchequer; and, on the other hand, a ferocious bigotry, which was really sublime in its indomitable obstinacy, might have been humoured without prejudice to the grandeur of the *imperial* claims. Even little Palmyra in later times was indulged to a greater extent, without serious injury in any quarter, had it not been for the

[1] "*Under Herod the Great and his father*":—It was a tradition which circulated at Rome down to the days of the Flavian family (*i.e.* Vespasian the tenth Cæsar, and his two sons—Titus the eleventh, and Domitian the twelfth) that the indulgence conceded to Judea by the imperial policy from Augustus downwards arose out of the following little diplomatic secret:—On the rise of the Parthian power, ambassadors had been sent to Antipater, the father of Herod, offering the Parthian alliance and support. At the same moment there happened to be in Judea a Roman agent, charged with a mission from the Roman Government, having exactly the same objects. The question was most solemnly debated; for it was obvious that ultimately this question touched the salvation of the kingdom; since to accept an alliance with either empire would be to *insure* the bitter hostility of the other. With that knowledge fully before his mind, Antipater made his definitive election for Rome. The case transpired at Rome—the debate, and the issue of the debate—and eventually proved worth a throne to the Herodian family; for the honour of Rome seemed to be concerned in supporting that oriental man who, in this sort of judgment of Paris, had solemnly awarded the prize of superiority (*Detur meliori*) to the western potentate.

feminine arrogance in little insolent Zenobia that misinterpreted and abused that indulgence.

The miscalculation, in fact, of Judas Iscariot—supposing him really to have entertained the views ascribed to him—did not hinge at all upon political oversights, but upon a total spiritual blindness; in which blindness, however, he went no farther than at that time did probably most of his brethren. Upon *them* quite as little as upon *him* had yet dawned the true grandeur of the Christian scheme. In this only he outran his brethren—that, sharing in their blindness, he greatly exceeded them in presumption. All alike had imputed to their master views utterly irreconcilable with the grandeur of his new and heavenly religion. It was no religion at all which they, previously to the crucifixion, supposed to be the object of Christ's teaching; it was a mere preparation for a pitiably vulgar scheme of earthly aggrandisement. But, whilst the other apostles had simply failed to comprehend their master, Judas had presumptuously assumed that he *did* comprehend him, and understood his purposes better than Christ himself. His object was audacious in a high degree, but (according to the theory which I am explaining) for that very reason not treacherous at all. The more that he was liable to the approach of audacity, the less can he be suspected of perfidy. He supposed himself executing the very innermost purposes of Christ, but with an energy which it was the characteristic infirmity of Christ to want. He fancied that by *his* vigour of action were fulfilled those great political changes which Christ approved, but wanted audacity to realise. His hope was that, when at length actually arrested by the Jewish authorities, Christ would no longer vacillate; he would be forced into giving the signal to the populace of Jerusalem, who would then rise unanimously, for the double purpose of placing Christ at the head of an insurrectionary movement and of throwing off the Roman yoke. As regards the worldly prospects of this scheme, it is by no means improbable that Iscariot was right. It seems, indeed, altogether impossible that he, who (as the treasurer of the apostolic fraternity) had in all likelihood the most of worldly wisdom, and was best acquainted with the temper of the times, could have made any gross blunder as to the

wishes and secret designs of the populace in Jerusalem.[1] This populace, however, not being backed by any strong section of the aristocracy, having no confidence again in any of the learned bodies connected with the great service of their national temple, neither in Scribes nor Pharisees, neither in Sadducees nor Levites, and having no leaders, were apparently dejected, and without unity. The probability meantime is that some popular demonstration would have been made on behalf of Christ, had he himself offered it any encouragement. But we, who know the incompatibility of any such encouragement with the primary purpose of Christ's mission upon earth, know of necessity that Judas,

[1] "*Of the populace in Jerusalem*":—Judas, not less than the other Apostles, had doubtless been originally chosen upon the apparent ground of superior simplicity and unworldliness, or else of superior zeal in testifying obedience to the wishes of his master. But the other eleven were probably exposed to no special temptation: Judas, as the purse-bearer, *was*. His official duty must have brought him every day into minute and circumstantial communication with an important order of men—viz. petty shopkeepers; what in modern Scotland are called *merchants*. In all countries alike these men fulfil a great political function. Beyond all others, they are brought into the most extensive connexion with the largest *stratum* by far in the composition of society. They receive, and with dreadful fidelity they give back, all Jacobinical impulses. They know thoroughly in what channels, under any call arising for insurrectionary action, these impulses are at any time moving. In times of fierce political agitation these are the men who most of all are kept up *au courant* of the interior councils and policy amongst the great body of acting conspirators. Consciousness, which such men always have, of deep incorruptible fidelity to their mother-land, and to her interests, however ill understood, ennobles their politics, even when otherwise base. They are corrupters in a service that never can be utterly corrupt. Traitors to the government, they cannot be traitors to the country. They have, therefore, a power to win attention from virtuous men; and, being known to speak a representative language (known, I mean, to speak the thoughts of the national majority), they would easily, in a land so agitated and unreconciled, so wild, stormy, and desperately ignorant, as Judea, kindle in stirring minds the most fiery contagions of principle and purpose. Judas being thus, on the one hand, kept through these men in vital sympathy with the restless politics of the insurrectionist populace; on the other hand hearing daily from his master a sublime philosophy that rested for its key-note upon the advent of vast revolutions among men: what wonder that he should connect these contradictory but parallel currents of his hourly experience by a visionary synthesis?

and the populace on which he relied, must equally and simultaneously have found themselves undeceived for ever. In an instant of time one grand decisive word and gesture of Christ must have put an end peremptorily to all hopes of that kind. In that brief instant enough was made known to Judas for final despair. Whether he had ever drunk profoundly enough from the cup of spiritual religion to understand the full *meaning* of Christ's refusal,—not only the *fact* of this refusal, but also the infinity of what secretly it involved ; whether he still adhered to his worldly interpretation of Christ's mission, and simply translated the refusal into a confession that all was lost, whilst in very fact all was on the brink of absolute and triumphant consummation : it is impossible for us, without documents or hints, to conjecture. Enough is apparent to show that, in reference to any hopes that could be consolatory for *him*, all was indeed lost. The kingdom of this world had melted away in a moment like a cloud ; and it mattered little to a man of *his* nature that a spiritual kingdom survived, if in his heart there were no spiritual organ by which he could appropriate the new and stunning revelation. Equally he might be swallowed up by despair in the case of retaining his old worldly delusions, and finding the ground of his old anticipations suddenly giving way below his feet, or again in the opposite case of suddenly correcting his own false constructions of Christ's mission, and of suddenly apprehending a far higher purpose ; but which purpose, in the very moment of becoming intelligible, rose into a region far beyond his own frail fleshly sympathies. He might read more truly ; but what of that, if the new truth, suddenly made known as a *letter*, were in *spirit* absolutely nothing at all to the inner sense of his heart? The despondency of Judas might be of two different qualities, more or less selfish,—indeed, I would go so far as to say, selfish or altogether unselfish. And it is with a view to this question, and under a persuasion of a wrong done to Judas by gross mistranslation disturbing the Greek text, that I entered at all upon this little memorandum. Else what I have hitherto been attempting to explain (excepting, however, the part relating to the *hakim*, which is entirely my own suggestion) belongs in part to German

writers.[1] The whole construction of the Iscariot's conduct, as arising, not out of perfidy, but out of his sincere belief that some quickening impulse was called for by a morbid feature in Christ's temperament—all this, I believe, was originally due to the Germans ; and it is an important correction ; for it must always be important to recall within the fold of Christian forgiveness any one who has long been sequestered from human charity and has tenanted a Pariah grave. In the greatest and most memorable of earthly tragedies Judas is a prominent figure. So long as the earth revolves, he cannot be forgotten. If, therefore, there is a doubt affecting his case, he is entitled to the benefit of that doubt ; and, if he has suffered to any extent—if simply to the extent of losing a palliation, or the shadow of a palliation—by means of a false translation from the Greek, we ought not to revise merely, or simply to mitigate his sentence, but to dismiss him from the bar. The Germans make it a question—in what spirit the Iscariot lived? *My* question is—in what spirit he died? If he were a traitor at last, in that case he was virtually a traitor always. If in the last hours of his connexion with Christ he perpetrated a treason, and even (which is our vulgar reading of the case) a mercenary treason, then he must have been dallying with purposes of treason during all the hours of his apostleship. If, in reality, when selling his master for money, he meant to betray him, and regarded the money as the commensurate motive for betraying him, then his case will assume a very different aspect from that impressed upon it by the German construction of the circumstances.

The *life* of Judas, and the *death* of Judas, taken apart, or taken jointly,—each separately upon independent grounds, or both together upon common grounds,—are open to doubts and perplexities. And possibly the double perplexities, if fully before us, might turn out each to neutralise the other. Taking them jointly, we might ask—Were they, this life and this death, to be regarded as a common movement on behalf of a deep and heart-fretting Hebrew patriotism, which was not the less sincere because it ran headlong into the unamiable form of rancorous nationality and inhuman bigotry?

[1] See footnote *ante*, pp. 178-179.—M.

Were they a wild degeneration from a principle originally noble? Or, on the contrary, this life and this death, were they alike the expression of a base, mercenary selfishness, caught and baffled in the meshes of its own chicanery? The life, if it could be appreciated in its secret principles, might go far to illustrate the probable character of the death. The death, if its circumstances were recoverable, and could be liberated from the self-contradictory details in the received report, might do something to indicate retrospectively the character and tenor of that life. The life of Judas, under a German construction of it, as a spasmodic effort of vindictive patriotism and of rebellious ambition, noble by possibility in its grand central motive, though erring and worldly-minded of necessity in the potential circumstances of its evolution when measured by a standard so exalted as that of Christianity, would infer (as its natural sequel) a death of fierce despair. Read under the ordinary construction as a life exposed to temptations that were petty, and frauds that were always mercenary, it could not reasonably be supposed to furnish any occasion for passions upon so great a scale as those which seem to have been concerned in the tragical end of Judas, whether the passions were those of remorse and penitential anguish, or of frantic wrath and patriotic disappointment. Leaving, however, to others the task of conjecturally restoring its faded lineaments to this mysterious record of a crime that never came before any human tribunal, I separately pursue a purpose that is narrower. I seek to recall and to recombine the elements, not of the Iscariot's life, nor of his particular offence, but simply of his death,—which final event in his career, as a death marked by singular circumstances, might, if once truly deciphered, throw back some faint illustrative light both upon the life and upon the offence.

The reader is probably aware that there has always been an obscurity, or even a perplexity, connected with the death of Judas. Two only out of the entire five documents which record the rise and early history of Christianity have circumstantially noticed this event. The evangelists Mark, Luke, and John, leave it undescribed. St. Matthew and the Acts of the Apostles have bequeathed to us a picturesque account

of it,[1] which, to my own belief, has been thoroughly misunderstood, and, once *being* misunderstood, naturally enough has been interpreted as something fearfully preternatural. The crime, though great, of the Iscariot has probably been much exaggerated. It was, under my interpretation, the crime of signal and earthly presumption, seeking not to thwart the purposes of Christ, still less to betray them—on the contrary, to promote them ; but how?—by means utterly at war with their central spirit. As far as can be judged, it was an attempt to forward the counsels of God by weapons borrowed from the armoury of darkness. The crime being once misapprehended (as a crime without a name or a precedent), it was inevitable that the punishment, so far as it was expounded by the death of the criminal, should, in obedience to this first erroneous preconception, be translated into something preternatural. To a mode of guilt which seemed to have no parallel it was reasonable enough that there should be apportioned a death which allowed of no medical explanation.[2]

[1] Matthew xxvii. 3-10 ; Acts i. 15-20.—M.

[2] "*No medical explanation*":—In neutral points, having no relation to morals or religious philosophy, it is not concealed by the scriptural records themselves that even inspired persons made grave mistakes. All the Apostles, it is probable, or with the single exception of St. John (which single exception I make in deference to many parts of the Apocalypse arguing too evidently an immunity from this error), shared in the mistake about the second coming of Christ, as an event immediately to be looked for. With respect to diseases, again, it is evident that the Apostles, in common with all Jews, were habitually disposed to read in them distinct manifestations of heavenly wrath. In blindness, for instance, or, again, in death from the fall of a tower, they read, as a matter of course, a plain expression of the divine displeasure pointed at an individual. That they should even so far pause as to doubt whether the individual or his parents had been the object of this displeasure arose only out of those cases where innocent infants were the sufferers. This, in fact, was a prejudice inalienable from their Jewish training ; and, as it would unavoidably lead oftentimes to judgments not only false, but also uncharitable, it received, on more occasions than one, a stern rebuke from Christ himself. In the same spirit it is probable that the symptoms attending death were sometimes erroneously reported as preternatural when, in fact, such as every hospital could match. The death of the first Herod was regarded by the early Christians universally as a judicial expression of God's wrath to the author of the massacre at Bethlehem, though in reality the

This demur, moreover, of obscurity was not the only one raised against the death of Judas: there was a separate objection—that it was inconsistent with itself. He was represented, in the ordinary modern versions, as dying by a double death—viz. (1) by a suicidal death: "*he went and hanged himself*"—this is the brief account of his death given by St. Matthew; but (2) by a death *not* suicidal: in the Acts of the Apostles we have a very different account of his death, not suggesting suicide at all, and otherwise describing it as mysteriously complex; that is, presenting us with various circumstances of the case, none of which in the common vernacular versions (whether English or continental) is at all intelligible. The elements in the case are three: that he "fell down headlong"; that he "burst asunder in the middle"; and that "his bowels gushed out": the first of these elements being unintelligible as regards any previous circumstances stated in the report; and the two others being purely and blankly impossible.

These objections to the particular mode of that catastrophe which closed the career of Judas had been felt pretty generally in the Christian Church, and probably from the earliest times; and the more so on account of that deep obscurity which rested upon the nature of his offence. That a man who had been solemnly elected into the small band of the Apostles should so far wander from his duty as to incur forfeiture of his great office: this was in itself sufficiently dreadful, and a shocking revival to the human imagination

symptoms were such as often occur in obstinate derangements of the nervous system. Indeed, as to many features, the malady of the French king Charles IX, whose nervous system had been shattered by the horrors of the St. Bartholomew massacre, very nearly resembled it, with such differences as might be looked for between an old, ruined constitution, such as Herod's, and one so full of youthful blood as that of Charles. In the Acts of the Apostles, again, the grandson of Herod the Great—viz. Herod Agrippa—is evidently supposed to have died by a judicial and preternatural death, whereas, apparently, one part of his malady was the *morbus pediculari*s—cases of which I have myself circumstantially known in persons of all ranks: one, for instance, being that of an English countess, rich beyond the scale of oriental sultans, and the other a female upper servant in my mother's household. Both died. Sylla, the great Roman leader, died of the same disease.

of that eldest amongst all *moral* traditions — a tradition descending to us from what date we know not, nor through what channel of possible communication—viz. the obscure tale that even into the heaven of heavens, and amongst the angelic hosts, rebellion against God, long before man and human frailty existed, should have crept by some contagion metaphysically inconceivable. What search could be sufficient where even the eye of Christ had failed to detect any germ of evil? Into the choir of angelic hosts, though watched by God—into the choir of apostles, though searched by Christ—had a traitor crept? Still, though the crime of Judas had doubtless been profound[1] (and evidently to me it had been the intention of the early Church to throw a deep pall of mystery over its extent), charity—that unique charity which belongs to Christianity, as being the sole charity ever preached to men which "hopeth all things"—inclined through every age the hearts of musing readers to suspend their verdict where the Scriptures had themselves practised a noticeable reserve, and where (if only through the extreme perplexity of their final and revised expressions) they had left an opening, or almost an invitation, to doubt. The doubt was left by the Primitive Church where Scripture had left it. There was not any absolute necessity that this should ever be cleared up to man. But it was felt from the very first that some call was made upon the Church to explain and to harmonise the apparently contradictory expressions used in what may be viewed as the *official* report of the one memorable domestic tragedy in the infant stage of the Christian history. *Official* I call it, as being in a manner countersigned by the whole confederate Church, when proceeding to their first common act in filling up the vacancy consequent upon the transgression of Judas, whereas the account of St. Matthew pleaded no authority but his own. And *domestic* I call the tragedy, in prosecution of that beautiful image under which a father of our English Church has called the twelve

[1] "*Profound*":—In measuring which, however, the reader must not allow himself to be too much biassed by the *English* phrase "son of *perdition*." To find such words as shall graduate and adjust their depth of feeling to the scale of another language, and that language a dead language, is many times beyond all reach of human skill.

apostles, when celebrating the paschal feast, "the *family*[1] of Christ."

This early essay of the Church to harmonise the difficult expressions employed in the Acts of the Apostles—an essay which, therefore, recognises at once the fact that these expressions really *were* likely to perplex the simple-hearted, and not merely to perplex such readers as systematically raised cavils —was brought forward in the earliest stage of the Church, and under the sanction of the very highest authority—viz. by one who sat at the feet of the beloved apostle; by one, therefore, who, if he had not seen Christ, had yet seen familiarly him in whom Christ most confided. But I will report the case in the words of that *golden-mouthed* rhetorician, that *Chrysostom* of the English Church, from whose lips all truth came mended, and who, in spite of Shakspere himself, found it possible

> "To gild refined gold, to paint the lily,
> To throw a perfume on the violet."

The following is the account given by Jeremy Taylor[2] of

[1] "*The family of Christ*":—For the reader must not forget that the original meaning of the Latin word *familia* was not at all what we moderns mean by a *family*, but the sum-total of the *famuli*. To say, therefore, in speaking of a Roman nobleman, "that his entire *familia*, numbering four hundred individuals, had been crucified," would not, to a Roman audience, convey the impression that his children or grandchildren, his cognati or agnati, those of his affinity or his consanguinity, could have entered into the list by the very smallest fraction. It would be understood that his slaves had perished judicially, and none beside. So again, whenever it is said in an ancient classic that such or such a man had a large family, or that he was kind to his family, or was loved by his family, always we are to understand not at all his wife and children, but the train and retinue of his domestic slaves. Now, the relation of the Apostles to their master, and the awfulness of their dependency upon him, which represented a golden chain suspending the whole race of man to the heavens above, justified, in the first place, that form of expression which should indicate the humility and loyalty that is owned by servants to a lord; whilst, on the other hand, the tenderness involved in the relations expressed by the English word *family* redressed what might else have been too austere in the idea, and recomposed the equilibrium between the two forces of reverential awe and of child-like love which are equally indispensable to the orbicular perfection of Christian fealty.

[2] The quotations from Jeremy Taylor which begin here are from his

the whole history, in so far as it affects the Scripture report of what Judas did, and what finally he suffered :—"Two "days before the Passover, the Scribes and Pharisees called "a council to contrive crafty ways[1] of destroying Jesus, they "not daring to do it by open violence. Of which meeting "when Judas Iscariot had notice (for those assemblies were "public and notorious), he ran from Bethany, and offered him-"self to betray his master to them, if they would give him "a considerable reward. They agreed for thirty pieces of "silver." In a case so memorable as this nothing is or can be trivial; and even that curiosity is not unhallowed which has descended to inquire what sum, at that era of Jewish history, this expression might indicate. The bishop replies thus :—"Of what value each piece was is uncertain; but "their own nation hath given a rule that, when a piece of "silver is named in the Pentateuch it signifies a *sicle*,[2] if it "be named in the Prophets it signifies a *pound*, if in the "other writings of the Old Testament it signifies a *talent*." For this, besides other less familiar authority, there is cited the well-known Arias Montanus, in the Syro-Chaldaic dic-

Life of Christ, in the section entitled "Of the accidents happening from the death of Lazarus until the death and burial of Jesus." —M.

[1] "*Crafty ways*" :—Otherwise it must naturally occur to every reader—What powers could Judas furnish towards the arrest of Jesus beyond what the authorities in Jerusalem already possessed? But the bishop suggests that the dilemma was this :—By day it was unsafe to seize him, such was the veneration of the populace for his person. If done at all, it must be done during the darkness. But precisely during those hours Christ withdrew into solitudes known only to his disciples. So that to corrupt one of these was the preliminary step to the discovery of that secret.

[2] By which coin I conceive that the illustrious bishop understood a Hebrew *shekel*, which I have always represented to myself as a *rupee*; for each alike, shekel or rupee, was—1, a silver coin; 2, a most ugly coin; 3, when in its normal state, worth half-an-ounce of silver—*i.e.* an English half-crown; 4, liable to sink into another coin, equal in ugliness, but less in value—viz. the modern English *florin*. Fifty years ago (as I by a lively experience remember) a sound *sicca* rupee passed current in Bengal for thirty English pence. But since then it has descended into decimal uses, being, for a whole generation back, uniformly accounted the exact tenth part of our pound. So that a *lac* of rupees, which means a *hundred thousand* rupees, is the ordinary expression all over India for ten thousand pounds sterling.

tionary. It is, however, self-evident that any service open to Judas would have been preposterously overpaid by thirty Attic talents, a sum which exceeded five thousand pounds sterling. And, since this particular sum had originally rested on the authority of a prophet, cited by one of the evangelists,[1] "it is probable," proceeds the bishop, "that the

[1] Viz. St. Matthew. Upon which the bishop notices the error, which had crept into the prevailing text, of Jeremias instead of Zecharias. But in the fourth century some copies had already corrected this reading; which, besides, had a traditional excuse in the proverbial saying that the spirit of Jeremias had settled and found a resting-place in Zecharias.—[The words in Matthew xxvii. 9-10 in the Authorised Version run thus:—"Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me." In the Revised Version also we still read, "Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying," &c. Yet the passage referred to is not in Jeremiah, but in Zechariah. There, xi. 12-13, the words in the Authorised Version run, "And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prised at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord." As De Quincey observes, the seeming misquotation by St. Matthew had attracted attention very early. An account of the various opinions on the subject from the fourth century onwards will be found in the article *Zechariah* in Smith's Dictionary of the Bible; from which the following extract may be interesting here:—"Jerome [died 420] observes: 'This passage is not found in Jeremiah. But in Zechariah, who is nearly the last of the twelve prophets, something like it occurs: and, though there is no great difference in the meaning, yet both the order and the words are different. I read a short time since, in a Hebrew volume, which a Hebrew of the sect of the Nazarenes presented to me, an apocryphal book of Jeremiah, in which I found the passage word for word. But still I am rather inclined to think that the quotation is made from Zechariah, in the usual manner of the Evangelists and Apostles, who, neglecting the order of the words, only give the general sense of what they cite from the Old Testament.' Eusebius is of opinion that the passage thus quoted stood originally in the prophecy of Jeremiah, but was either erased subsequently by the malice of the Jews, or that the name of Jeremiah was substituted for that of Zechariah through the carelessness of copyists. Augustine testifies that the most ancient Greek copies had *Jeremiah*, and thinks that the mistake was originally St. Matthew's, but that this was divinely ordered, and that the Evangelist would not correct the error even when

" price at which Judas sold his Lord was thirty pounds " weight of silver [that is, about ninety guineas sterling in " English money]—a goodly price for the Saviour of the " world to be prized at by his undiscerning and unworthy " countrymen!" Where, however, the learned bishop makes a slight oversight in logic, since it was not precisely Christ that was so valued—this prisoner as against the certain loss of this prisoner—but simply this particular mode of contending with the difficulty attached to his apprehension; since, in the very worst case, this opportunity lost might be replaced by other opportunities, and the price, therefore, was not calculated as it would have been under one solitary chance, —that is, the price was not measured (as the bishop assumes it to have been) against the total and final value of Christ.

The bishop then proceeds with the rehearsal of all the circumstances connected with the pretended trial of Christ; and, coming in the process of his narrative to the conduct of Judas on learning the dreadful turn which things were taking (conduct which surely argues that he had anticipated a most opposite catastrophe), he winds up the case of the Iscariot in the following passage :—" When Judas heard that " they had passed the final and decretory sentence of death " upon his Lord, he, who thought not it would have gone so " far, repented him to have been an instrument of so dam- " nable a machination, and came and brought the silver which " they gave him for hire, and threw it in amongst them, and " said, 'I have sinned in betraying the innocent blood.' But " they, incurious of those hell-torments Judas felt within " him, because their own fires burned not yet, dismissed " him." I pause for a moment to observe that, in the expression " repented him to have been an instrument," the context shows the bishop intending to represent Judas as recoiling from the issue of his own acts, and from so damnable a machination, not because his better feelings were

pointed out, in order that we might thus infer that all the Prophets spake by one Spirit, and that what was the work of one was the work of all."—It is in a Latin footnote that Jeremy Taylor, in his *Life of Christ*, mentions the substitution of " Jeremiah " for " Zechariah " in the text of St. Matthew and accounts for it in the way indicated by De Quincey.—M.]

evoked as the prospect of ruin to his master drew near, and that he shrank from the same thing when taking a definite shape of fulfilment which he had faced cheerfully when at a distance. Not at all: the bishop's meaning is that Judas recoiled from his own acts at the very instant when he began to understand their real consequences, now solemnly opening upon his horrorstricken understanding; not (understand me) as consequences to which he could no longer reconcile himself, now that they drew nearer, but as consequences to which he never *had* reconciled himself for a moment—consequences, in fact, to which he had never adverted as possibilities. He had hoped, probably, much from the Roman interference; and the history itself shows that in this he had not been at all too sanguine. Justice has never yet been done to the conduct of Pilate. That man has little comprehended the style and manner of the New Testament who does not perceive the demoniac earnestness of Pilate to effect the liberation of Christ, or who fails to read the anxiety of the several evangelists to put on record his profound sympathy with the prisoner. The falsest word that ever yet was uttered upon any part of the New Testament is that sneer of Lord Bacon's at "*jesting* Pilate."[1] Pilate was in deadly earnest from first to last; never for a moment had he "jested"; and he retired from his frantic effort on behalf of Christ only when his own safety began to be seriously compromised. Do the thoughtless accusers of Pilate fancy that he was a Christian, or under the moral obligations of a Christian? If not, why, or on what principle, was he to ruin himself at Rome in order to favour one whom he could not save at Jerusalem? How reasonably Judas had relied upon the Roman interference is evident from what actually took place. Judas relied, secondly, upon the Jewish mob; and that this reliance also was well warranted appears from repeated instances of the fear with which the Jewish rulers contemplated Christ. Why did they fear him at all? Why did they fear him in the very lowest degree? Simply as he was backed by the people: had it not been for *their* support, Christ was no more

[1] "*What is Truth?* said jesting Pilate, and would not stay for an answer": is the celebrated first sentence of Bacon's essay "Of Truth." —M.

an object of terror to them than his herald, the Baptist. But what I here insist on is (which else, from some expressions, the reader might fail to understand) that Jeremy Taylor nowhere makes the mistake of supposing Judas to have originally designed the ruin of his master, and nowhere understands by his "repentance" that he felt remorse on coming near to consequences which from a distance he had tolerated or even desired. He admits clearly that Judas was a traitor only in the sense of seeking his master's aggrandisement by methods which placed him in revolt against that master,—methods which not only involved express and formal disobedience to that master, but which ran into headlong hostility against the spirit of all that he came on earth to effect. It was the revolt, not of perfidious malignity, but of arrogant and carnal blindness. It was the revolt (as Jeremy Taylor rightly views it) of one who sought to the last the fulfilment of his master's will, but by methods running counter to that master's will. In respect to the gloomy termination of the Iscariot's career, and to the perplexing account of it given in the Acts of the Apostles, the bishop closes his account thus:—"And Judas went and hanged "himself; and the judgment was made more notorious "and eminent by an unusual accident at such deaths; for "he so swelled that he burst and his bowels gushed out. "But the Greek scholiast and some others report out of "Papias, St. John's scholar,[1] that Judas fell from the fig-tree "on which he hanged before he was quite dead, and survived "his attempt some while; being so sad a spectacle of de-"formity and pain, and a prodigious tumour, that his plague "was deplorable and highly miserable; till at last he burst "in the very substance of his trunk, as being extended be-"yond the possibilities[2] and capacities of nature."

In this corrected version of Papias we certainly gain an intelligible account of what otherwise is far from intelligible —viz. the *falling headlong*. But all the rest is a dismal heap

[1] Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis in Asia Minor (died about A.D. 169), was the author of a Greek Commentary on the Gospels, of which only fragments of quotations now remain.—M.

[2] "*Possibilities*":—*Quære*—whether the true reading is not more probably "passibilities": *i.e.* liabilities to suffering.

of irrationalities; and the single ray of light which is obtained —viz. the suggestion of the fig-tree as an elevation which explains the possibility of a headlong fall, or any fall whatever—is of itself an argument that some great disturbance must have happened to the text at this point: else how could so material a circumstance have silently dropped out of the narrative? There are passages in every separate book of the canon into which accident, or the somnolence of copyists, or their blind stupidity, or rash self-conceit, has introduced errors seriously disturbing the sense and the coherence. Many of these have been rectified in the happiest manner by ingenious suggestions; and a considerable proportion of these suggestions has been since verified and approved by the discovery of new manuscripts, or the more accurate collation of old ones. In the present case, a much slighter change than might be supposed requisite will suffice to elicit a new and perfect sense from the general outline of that text which still survives. First, as to the phrase "*fell headlong*," I do not understand it of any fall from a fig-tree, or from any tree whatever. This fig-tree I regard as a purely fanciful and innovating resource; and evidently any innovation ranks to this extent amongst those conjectural audacities which shock the discreet reader as unsatisfactory and licentious, because purely gratuitous, when they rest upon no traces that can be indicated as still lurking in the present text. *Fell headlong* may stand as at present: it needs no change; for it discloses a very good and sufficient sense if we understand it figuratively as meaning that he came to utter and unmitigated ruin, that his wreck was total; for that, instead of dedicating himself to a life of penitential sorrow, such as would assuredly have conciliated the divine forgiveness, the unhappy criminal had rushed out of life by suicide. So far, at least, all is coherent, and under no further obligations to change, small or great, beyond the reading in a metaphorical sense that which, if read (as hitherto) in a literal sense, would require the very serious interpolation of an imaginary fig-tree.

What remains is equally simple. The change involves as little violence, and the result from this change will appear not at all less natural. But a brief preliminary explanation is requisite, in order to place it advantageously before the

reader. The ancients use the term *bowels* with a latitude unknown generally to modern literature, but especially to English literature. In the midst of the far profounder passion which distinguishes the English from all literatures on the modern European continent, it is singular that a fastidious decorum never sleeps for a moment. It might be imagined that this fastidiousness would be in the inverse ratio of the passion; but it is not so. In particular, the French,—certainly the literature which ranges at the lowest elevation upon the scale of passion,—nevertheless is often homely, and even gross, in its recurrences to frank elementary nature. For a lady to describe herself as laughing *à gorge deployée*,—a grossness which with us, equally on the stage or in real life, would be regarded with horror,—amongst the French attracts no particular attention. Again, amidst the supposed refinements of French tragedy,—and not the coarser (because earlier) tragedy of Corneille, but amidst the more feminine and polished tragedy of Racine,—there is no recoil at all from saying of such or such a sentiment, "*Il me perce les entrailles*" ("it penetrates my bowels"). The Greeks and Romans still more extensively use the several varieties of expression for *the intestines* as a symbolic phraseology for the domestic and social affections. We English even, fastidious as we are, employ the term *bowels* as a natural symbolisation for the affections of pity, mercy, or parental and brotherly affection. At least we do so in recurring to the simplicities of the Scriptural style. But amongst the Romans the word *viscera* is so naturally representative of the household affections that at length it becomes necessary to recall an English reader to the true meaning of this word. Through some prejudice, originating in the absurd physiology of our worshipful Pagan masters, Greek and Roman, it is true that the bowels have always been regarded as the seat of the more tender and sorrowing sympathies. But the *viscera* comprehended *all* the intestines, or (as the French term them) *les entrailles*. The heart even is a *viscus*; perhaps, in a very large acceptation, the brain might be regarded as a co-viscus with the heart. There is very slight ground for holding the brain to be the organ of thinking, or the heart of moral sensibilities, more than the stomach, or the bowels, or the

intestines generally.[1] But waive all this: the Romans designated the seat of the larger and nobler (*i.e.* the moral) sensibilities indifferently by these three terms—the *pectus*, the *præcordia*, and the *viscera*. As to the *cor*, it seems to me that it denoted the heart in its grosser and more animal capacities: "Molle meum levibus *cor* est violabile telis"; the *cor* was the seat of sexual passion; but nobler and more reflective sensibilities inhabited the *pectus* or *præcordia*; and naturally out of these physiologic preconceptions arose corresponding expressions for wounded or ruined sensibilities. We English, for instance, insist on the disease of *broken heart*, which Sterne, in a well-known passage, postulates as a malady not at all the less definite than phthisis or podagra because it is not formally recognised in the bills of mortality. But it is evident that a theory which should represent the *viscera* as occupied by those functions of the moral sensibilities which *we* place in the central *viscus* of the heart must, in following out that hypothesis, figure the case of these sensibilities when utterly ruined under corresponding images. Our "broken heart" will therefore to them become ruptured *viscera*, or *præcordia* that have burst. To burst in the middle is simply to be shattered and ruined in the *central* organ of our sensibilities, which is the heart; and, in saying that the *viscera* of Iscariot, or his middle, had burst and gushed out, the original reporter meant simply that his heart had broke. That was precisely his case. Out of pure anguish that the scheme which he meant for the sudden glorification of his master had recoiled (according to all worldly interpretation) in his utter ruin; that the sudden revolution, through a democratic movement, which was to raise himself and his brother apostles into Hebrew princes, had scattered them like sheep without a shepherd; and that, superadded to this common burden of ruin, he personally had to bear a separate load of conscious disobedience to God and insupportable responsibility: naturally enough, out of all this he fell into fierce despair; *his heart broke*; and under that storm of

[1] In an earlier paper De Quincey had started the opinion that "the brain and the stomach-apparatus, through their reciprocal action and reaction, jointly make up the compound organ of thought." —M.

affliction he hanged himself. Here, again, all clears itself up by the simple substitution of a figurative interpretation for one grossly and ludicrously physical. All contradiction disappears; not three deaths assault him—viz. suicide, and also a rupture of the intestines, and also an unintelligible effusion of the viscera—but simply suicide, and suicide as the result of that despondency which was figured under the natural idea of a broken heart or ruptured præcordia. The incoherences are gone; the contradictions have vanished; and the gross physical absurdities which under mistranslation had perplexed the confiding student no longer disfigure the Scriptures.

Looking back to the foot-note on the oriental idea of the *hakim* or itinerating *Therapeuta*—*i.e.* (if expressed by a modern idea) *missionary* physician—as a mask politically assumed by Christ and the Evangelists under the conviction of its indispensableness to the propagation of Christian philosophy,[1] I am induced, for the sake of detaining the reader's eye a little longer upon a matter so deeply intertwisted with the birth-throes of dawning Christianity, to subjoin an extract from a little paper written by myself heretofore, but not published. I may add these two remarks:—viz. First, that the attribution to St. Luke specially or exclusively of this medical character probably had its origin in the simple fact that an assumption made by *all* the evangelists, and perhaps by all the apostles, attracted a more fixed attention in *him*, and a more abiding remembrance, under causes merely local and accidental. One or two of the other apostles having pursued their labours of propagandism under the *avowed* character of *hakims*, many others in the same region would escape special notice in that character, simply because, as men notoriously ready to plead it, they had not been challenged to do so by the authorities; whilst other Christian emissaries, in regions where the government had not become familiar with the readiness to plead such a privilege as part of the apostolic policy, would be driven into the necessity of actually advancing the plea, and would thus (like St. Luke) obtain a traditionary claim to the medical title which in a latent sense had belonged to all, though all had not been

[1] See the footnote *ante*, pp. 178-179.—M.

reduced to the necessity of loudly pleading it. Secondly, I would venture to suggest that the *Therapeutæ*, or healers, technically so called, who came forward in Egypt during the generation immediately succeeding to that of Christ, were neither more nor less than disguised apostles to Christianity, preaching the same doctrines essentially as Christ, and under the very same protecting character of *hakims*, but putting forward this character perhaps more prominently, or even retreating into it altogether, according to the increasing danger which everywhere awaited them. For this danger was too generally double: first, from the Pagan natives resenting the insults offered to their own childish superstitions; secondly, and even more ferociously, from the hostile bigotry of expatriated Jews, as they gradually came to understand the true and anti-national views of those who called themselves, or in scorn were by others called, Christians, sometimes Nazarenes, sometimes Galileans.

In short, abstracting altogether from the *hatred* to Christ founded on the eternal enmity between the worldly and the spiritual, and looking only to the political uneasiness amongst magistrates which accompanied the early footsteps of Christianity, one may illustrate it by the parallel feelings of panic and official persecution which in our own generation (amongst the Portuguese, for instance) have dogged the movements of Freemasonry. We in England unwarrantably view this panic as irrational, because amongst ourselves it would be so; for British Freemasonry conceals nothing worse than it professes and broadly displays. But, on the Continent, it became a mask for shrouding any or every system of anti-social doctrine, or, again, at any moment, for playing into the hands of treason and conspiracy. There was always, in the first place, a reasonable fear of secret and perilous doctrines —Communism, for instance, under some modification, or rancorous Jacobinism. And, secondly, suppose that for the present, or in the existing stage of the secret society, there really were no esoteric and mischievous doctrine countenanced, there was at any rate the custom established of meeting together in secret, of corresponding by an alphabet of conventional signals, and of acting by an impenetrable organisation, always applicable to evil purposes, even where

it might not originally have been so applied or so designed. The machinery which binds together any secret society, as being always available for evil ends, must inevitably justify a little uneasiness, and therefore more than a little severity, in all political authorities.[1] And, under those circumstances, the public jealousy must have operated strongly against the free movement of early Christianity. Nothing could have disarmed that jealousy except some counter-principle so managed as to insure the freedom of public meetings ; for such meetings opened the *sine qua non* channel to the free propagation of religious doctrines. Unless people could be brought together in crowds, and suffered by jealous authorities to attend in tranquillity upon the oral teachings of an impassioned (some thought, of an inspired) rabbi, what *publication* was possible for any new truth whatever ? The fierce dilemma of the fanatical Mussulmans is always at hand—*What* new truth ? If it is more than already we possess, then it is false. If the same, then it is superfluous. And the Jewish Church, as it happened, was specially and redundantly armed to meet such a crisis—the crisis, I mean, of a new teacher arising with offers of new truth, whether it were new in the sense of *revolutionary* and *correcting*, or new in the humbler sense of *additional* and *supplementary*. For the Jews had a triple organ for uttering religious doubts, hopes, convictions, or sudden illuminations. There was, first of all (and generally by the sea-shore), the humble *Proseuché*, or oratory for private prayer. Secondly, in every city, domestic or alien, having any considerable resort of Jews (for the Jews were now spread all over the Mediterranean shores and islands, as well as all over Asia Minor), there was a Synagogue ; and in this, duly as Saturday came—*i.e.* the Sabbath—the Law and the Prophets were read, and (according to opportunity) were expounded by some rabbi more or less learned. Finally, for the crown in all *ornamental* senses, and for the *working* consummation as regarded truth and ceremonial shadows, points of law, casuistry, or personal vows, there was the glorious Temple and the temple service.

[1] The Chinese *Triads*, which for some generations have lurked as the framework of a secret society, are only now [*i.e.* in 1857] coming into ruinous action.

In these circumstances, what opening was left to the prophet of new truth? Apparently none. To *publish* a truth, to diffuse it from an oracular centre—in other words, to diffuse it with power and corresponding pathos—was a mysterious problem. To solve this problem in any sense answering to the great postulates of Christ seemed hopeless. Books, or newspapers, which *now* form our main resources for publication, could not, at the inaugural stage of Christianity, be looked for under a thousand and half-a-thousand years. As yet, to meet the necessities of a new doctrine that needed to be set afloat amongst mankind, but, above all, of a doctrine that sought popularisation amongst the poor, the unlearned, the abject, the despised, of earth, what channels were there available, what organs known and tried, that might be translated to alien uses, and appropriated by Christianity? I know of but three,—and all moving within severe restrictions of their powers, such as far removed them from any religious alliance. In Athens (and, derivatively from her, in other great cities) had arisen *Theatres*, tragic and comic—great organs of publication for peculiar modes of truth, and for culture in very ennobling arts, but controlled by bigotry the most ferocious. Another organ of publication, with inferior powers, within even sterner limitations, was found in the dignified resources of the *Orator*, Athenian or Roman, for giving depth and impressiveness to such narrow truths as he contemplated. A third organ lay in the position and sanctity of an *Oracle*; but of an oracle well accredited. To have any value as an organ of publication, the particular oracle must first possess—what is so important for a speaker in our British senate—"*the ear*" of its audience; and this very few oracles ever had except the Delphic. Two centuries before the Christian era, a favourable opinion upon a man or a family from the Oracle of Delphi was almost equal to a friendly review at present in the London "Quarterly." Perhaps the Delphic concern never rose exactly to the level of the London "Times." Spenser notices that, after all,

> "Not to have been dipped in Lethe flood
> Could save the son of Thetis from to die"—

ἀπο του θνησκειν. And so neither could a first-class estimate

of Socrates by the venerable but palsy-stricken Oracle of Delphi save that cunning and libidinous old fellow from to die by hemlock. *Laudatur et alget*: the wicked old man finds his vanity tickled, but his feet getting rigid and cold.[1]

Slight, therefore, and most inconsiderable, was the power practically of the very greatest organs in Greece for publishing truth with effect. The very idol of Athens could reap no aid from the very Panhellenic organ of glorification and world-wide diffusion. All the power of Delphi and her delirious priestess was not good—did not *tell* in practice—to the extent of one hour's respite from a public execution. Four centuries later, this oracle had sunk into dotage: like Socrates, *laudatur et alget*: the oracle still received gifts and lying homage from princes, but, like Socrates, its feet were growing rigid and paralytically cold.[2]

In these circumstances, when all the known organs of publication—stage, bema or rostrum, and the superhuman oracle—had failed jointly, failed memorably and laughably, to create a serviceable patronage on behalf of a man, a book, an event, a public interest, or a truth struggling with the perplexities of development, what engine, what machinery, could be set in motion, or suggested, having power to work as a co-agency with the internal forces of Christian truth?

[1] In this shockingly flippant mention of Socrates the reference is to the response said to have been returned by the Delphic Oracle to the question whether any existing man was wiser than Socrates of Athens. The response was in these words, "Of all men Socrates the wisest is." The original of the story is in Plato's *Apology of Socrates*.—M.

[2] One symptom of increasing dotage had caused infinite laughter for many generations; and those who detest the hellish religious bigotry of Athens, where free-thinking should rightfully have prevailed, but where it was in reality most of all dangerous, think with triumphant pleasure of the deadly mortification which this symptom inflicted upon the Athenian bigots, who could not deny it or hide it, whilst they beyond all people felt the ignominy and the profane inferences attending so vile a descent. The oracles had, from eldest days, been published in verse. In a rude age this verse had passed unchallenged, like village epitaphs amongst ourselves. But then came a literary age—a literary public, inexorable critics, all wide awake. What followed? Infinite laughter, and finally, on the part of the oracle, the most abject retreat into humble prose. Apollo, the very divinity that originated verse, could not cash a cheque upon himself for the sum of six hexameters: he was insolvent.

If there were none, then, under all human likelihoods, Christianity must perish in its earliest stage, or, rather, must collapse as a visionary *nisus*—as a spasm of dreamy yearning—before ever it reached such early stage. Standing at the outset of his career in this perplexity, and knowing well that countenance or collusion from the magistrate was hopeless in his own condition of poverty, Christ, from the armoury of his heavenly resources, brought forward a piece of artillery,[1] potent for his own purposes, and not evadable by any counter-artifice of his opponents. Disease—was that separable from man? He that worked through that ally—could he ever need to shrink or to cower before his enemies in the gate? Nothing in this world was so much the object of dread—alike rational and groundless—as crowds and the gatherings of the people to the magistrates of the ancient world. Yet, on the other hand, without crowds that he might harangue, might instruct, might melt, might mould to his new views, how could the Founder of a new and spiritual faith advance by a solitary foot?

Here, now, are two of the parties interested—namely, the Magistrate on the one side, and the Prophet[2] on the other.

[1] "*Artillery*" is a scriptural word; at least it is so in the vocabulary of our own vernacular translators [1 Samuel xx. 40.—M.]. They were much too vigilantly on their guard against all *real* anachronisms not to have weighed scrupulously this term when applied by Jonathan, the son of Saul, and the youthful David, rather more than a thousand years B.C., to the systems of archery (perhaps including the cross-bow, the catapult, and other mechanic aids) in those days known to the warlike tribes of Palestine.

[2] "*The Prophet*":—Make no mistake, reader. You, according to modern slang, understand probably by a *prophet* one who foretells coming events. But this is not the Scriptural sense of the word; nor am I aware that it is *once* used in such a sense throughout the entire Bible. A *prophet* is that man, in contradistinction to another man originally creating and moulding a new truth, who comes forward to utter and expound that truth. The two co-agents move in couples—move dualistically. Each is essential to the other. For instance, such a dualism rose like a constellation—rose like the *Gemini*—like the twin brothers Castor and Pollux—in two great Hebrew leaders, simultaneously to guide the hopes and the efforts of Israel when Israel first moulded itself into a nation—a nation that should furnish in a new sense an old deliverance, a second ark, with a nobler mission—an ark in which might tilt over the angry seas of our mysterious planet that mighty doctrine of God, the Trinity in Unity, which else, perish-

The two parties were directly at issue; and thus, in any ordinary case, no result would follow. But here there was a third party interested—namely, the whole world: after which number one (the Magistrate) could no longer be allowed to neutralise number two (the Builder of Truth). It is noticeable, and accordingly it has been often noticed, that nowhere are mobs more terrific and peremptory than in bloody despotisms. And the same truth is illustrated in the English history. During periods in which as yet the multitude enjoyed few absolute rights recognised by the law, mobs, when once put in motion, listened to no checks of authority. Seeing their way clearly under simple indications of blank necessity, or rightful claim, or old traditional usage, headlong they went forward, without fear of consequences, or regard to collateral results. Pretty nearly the same was doubtless the character of a Jerusalem mob, and precisely because it moved under the same elementary laws of human nature. "I," would say one man, "am not going to weather the torments of a cancer; nor will I suffer my poor daughter to pine away under a palsy, only because you are politically

ing in storms, would have left man himself to founder. This dualism of brethren—Aaron the priest, and Moses the lawgiver—luminously illustrates the great dualistic system of functions. Aaron cannot think; Moses cannot speak. The first is blind; the second is dumb. But, moving as a co-operating duad, they become the salvation of Israel: the dumb man, dumb as he is, can see; the blind man, blind as he is, can speak. Moses it is that furnishes the great ideas, the vast scheme of legislation for Israel: Aaron it is that publishes, that gives vocal utterance to these colossal ideas. Failing a Moses, there would be no ideas to manifest: failing an Aaron, there would be no manifestation of these august entities—they would die, and be confounded amidst the clouds of their almighty birth. Now, in Scripture, both Old and New, he that gives utterance to these else perishing conceptions is called a prophet, and is said to prophesy. How else could be explained those multiplied passages in which St. Paul notices "gifts of prophecy" as endowments of ordinary occurrence amongst his contemporaries? How absurd, in the common acceptation of the word *prophecy*! And what encouragement would the apostle be thus giving to false and blundering enthusiasm! "Prophesy unto us who it is that struck thee": that is, reveal, make manifest, as a thing hidden; not predict as a thing remote from our present time. How shameful, amidst the real and inevitable difficulties of Scripture, to leave sincere and simple-hearted students in conflict with mere idle, and, strictly speaking, false, usages of language!

jealous of this young man from Nazareth, whom else I and all my neighbours know equal to the task of relieving her in one hour." "Do not fancy," another would exclaim, "that I will tamely look on in patient acquiescence, whilst my little grand-daughter is shaken every day by epileptic fits; and why? because the Sanhedrim are afraid of the Romans and therefore of gathering mobs? To the great fiend with your Sanhedrim, if *that* is to be the excuse for keeping the blind from seeing and the lame from walking!"

Asking for bread, it is likely enough that the mobs of Judea would have received from their rulers a stone; but, asking for what seemed a stone, and by comparison was not much more, indirectly and under a mask they obtained what in a far higher and spiritual sense was bread. A tumult of the people for daily bread, what is traditionally known to all nations as a *bread riot*, cannot be met (it is well understood) by any remedy short of absolute concessions to the rebellious appetite. So, also, and in any land, would be the process and the result: such the fury, such the inexorable demand, such the inevitable concession, for the sake of appropriating instant and miraculous relief offered to agonising diseases.

Once announcing himself, and attesting by daily cures his own mission as a *hakim*, Christ could not be rejected as a public oracle of truth and heavenly counsel to human weakness. This explains what else would have been very obscure, the undue emphasis which Christ allowed men to place upon his *sanitary* miracles. His very name in Greek—namely, Ιησους—presented him to men under the idea of the *healer*, but then, to all who comprehended his secret and ultimate functions, as a healer of unutterable and spiritual wounds. That usurpation by which a very trivial function of Christ's public ministrations was allowed to disturb, and sometimes to eclipse, far grander pretensions carried with it so far an erroneous impression. But then, on the other hand, seventy-fold it redeemed that error by securing (which nothing else could have secured) the benefit of a perpetual passport to the *religious* missionary: since, once admitted as a medical counsellor, the missionary, the *hakim*, obtained an *unlimited* right of intercourse. The public police did not *dare* to obstruct the bodily healer; and exactly through that avenue slipped

in the spiritual healer. And thus, subsequently, the Apostles and their successors all exercised the same medical powers with the same religious results, and each in turn benefited in his spiritual functions by the same privileged character of *hakim*.

ON CHRISTIANITY AS AN ORGAN OF POLITICAL MOVEMENT[1]

Forces which are illimitable in their compass of effect are often, for the same reason, obscure and untraceable in the steps of their movement. Growth, for instance, animal or vegetable,—what eye can arrest its eternal increments? The hour-hand of a watch,—who can detect the separate fluxions of its advance? Judging by the past, and the change which is registered between that and the present, we know that it must be awake; judging by the immediate appearances, we should say that it was always asleep. Gravitation, again, that works without holiday for ever, and searches every corner of the universe, what intellect can follow it to its fountains? And yet, shyer than gravitation, less to be counted than the fluxions of sun-dials, stealthier than the growth of a forest, are the footsteps of Christianity amongst the political workings of man. Nothing that the heart of man values is so secret; nothing is so potent.

It is because Christianity works so secretly that it works so potently; it is because Christianity burrows and hides itself that it towers above the clouds; and hence partly it is that its working comes to be misapprehended, or even lost out of sight. It is dark to eyes touched with the films of human frailty: but it is "dark with excessive bright."[2] Hence it has happened sometimes that minds of the highest

[1] Published originally in *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* for April and June 1846: reprinted by De Quincey in 1859 in vol. xii. of his Collected Writings.—M.

[2] "Dark with excessive bright."—*Paradise Lost*, iii. 380.

order have entered into enmity with the Christian faith, have arraigned it as a curse to man, and have fought against it even upon Christian impulses (impulses of benignity that could not have had a birth except in Christianity). All comes from the labyrinthine intricacy in which the *social* action of Christianity involves itself to the eye of a contemporary. Simplicity the most absolute is reconcilable with intricacy the most elaborate. The weather—how simple would appear the laws of its oscillations if we stood at their centre ! and yet, because we do *not*, to this hour the weather is a mystery. Human health—how transparent is its economy under ordinary circumstances ! Abstinence and cleanliness, labour and rest, these simple laws, observed in just proportions, laws that may be engrossed upon a finger nail, are sufficient, on the whole, to maintain the equilibrium of pleasurable existence. Yet, if once that equilibrium is disturbed, where is the science oftentimes deep enough to rectify the unfathomable watch-work ? Even the simplicities of planetary motions do not escape distortion ; nor is it easy to be convinced that the distortion is in the eye which beholds, not in the object beheld. Let a planet be wheeling with heavenly science upon arches of divine geometry : suddenly, to us, it shall appear unaccountably retrograde ; flying when none pursues, and unweaving its own work. Let this planet in its utmost elongations travel out of sight, and for *us* its course will become incoherent : because *our* sight is feeble, the beautiful curve of the planet shall be dislocated into segments by a parenthesis of darkness ; because our earth is in no true centre, the disorder of parallax shall trouble the laws of light ; and, because we ourselves are wandering, the heavens shall seem fickle.

Exactly in the predicament of such a planet is Christianity : its motions are intermingled with other motions ; crossed and thwarted, eclipsed and disguised, by countermotions in man himself, and by disturbances that man cannot overrule. Upon lines that are direct, upon curves that are circuitous, Christianity is advancing for ever ; but, from our imperfect vision, or from our imperfect opportunities for applying even such a vision, we cannot trace it continuously. We lose it, we regain it ; we see it doubtfully, we see it

interruptedly; we see it in collision, we see it in combination,—in collision with darkness that confounds, in combination with cross lights that perplex. And this in part is irremediable; so that no finite intellect will ever retrace the total curve upon which Christianity has moved, any more than eyes that are incarnate will ever see God.

But part of this difficulty in unweaving the maze has its source in a misconception of the original machinery by which Christianity moved, and of the initial principle which constituted its differential power. In books, at least, I have observed one capital blunder upon the relations which Christianity bears to Paganism: and out of that one mistake grows a liability to others upon the possible relations of Christianity to the total drama of this world. I will endeavour to explain my views. And the reader who takes any interest in the subject will not need to fear that the explanation should prove tedious; for the mere want of space will put me under a coercion to move rapidly over the ground: I *cannot* be diffuse; and, as regards quality, he will find in this paper little of what is scattered over the surface of books.

I begin with this question: What do people mean in a Christian land by the word "*religion*"? My purpose is not to propound any metaphysical problem; I wish only, in the plainest possible sense, to ask, and to have an answer, upon this one point—how much is understood by that obscure term [1] "religion," when used by a Christian? Only I am

[1] "*That obscure term*":—*i.e.* not obscure as regards the *use* of the term, or its present value, but as regards its original *genesis*, or what in civil law is called the *deductio*. Under what angle, under what aspect or relation, to the field which it concerns did the term *religion* originally come forward? The general field overlooked by religion is the ground which lies between the spirit of man and the supernatural world. At present, under the humblest conception of religion, the human spirit is supposed to be interested in such a field by the conscience and the nobler affections. But I suspect that originally these great faculties were absolutely excluded from the point of view. Probably the relation between spiritual *terrors* and man's power of propitiation was the problem to which the word *religion* formed the answer. Religion meant apparently, in the infancies of the various idolatries, that *latreia*, or service of sycophantic fear, by which, as the most approved method of approach, man was

punctilious upon one demand—viz. that the answer shall be comprehensive. We are apt in such cases to answer elliptically, omitting, because silently presuming as understood between us, whatever *seems* obvious. To prevent *that*,

able to conciliate the favour, or to buy off the malice, of supernatural powers. In all Pagan nations it is probable that religion would, on the whole, be a degrading influence; although I see, even for such nations, two cases, at the least, where the uses of a religion would be indispensable—viz. for the sanction of *oaths*, and as a channel for gratitude not pointing to a human object. If so, the answer is easy: religion *was* degrading; but heavier degradations would have arisen from irreligion. The noblest of all idolatrous peoples, viz. the Romans, have left deeply scored in their very use of their word *religio* their testimony to the degradation wrought by any religion that Paganism could yield. Rarely, indeed, is this word employed by a Latin author, in speaking of an individual, without more or less of sneer. Reading that word in a Latin book, we all try it and ring it, as a petty shopkeeper rings a half-crown, before we venture to receive it as offered in good faith and loyalty. Even the Greeks are nearly in the same ἀπορια when they wish to speak of religiosity in a spirit of serious praise. Some circuitous form, commending the correctness of a man περι τα θεια, *in respect of divine things*, becomes requisite; for all the direct terms expressing the religious temper are preoccupied by a taint of scorn. The word ὁσιος means *pious*—not as regards the gods, but as regards the dead; and even εὐσεβης, though not used sneeringly, is a world short of our word "religious." This condition of language we need not wonder at: the language of life must naturally receive, as in a mirror, the realities of life. Difficult it is to maintain a just equipoise in any moral habits, but in none so much as in habits of religious demeanour under a Pagan (that is, a degrading) religion. To be a coward is base; to be a sycophant is base; but to be a sycophant in the service of cowardice is the perfection of baseness; and yet this was the brief analysis of a devotee amongst the ancient Romans. Now, considering that the word *religion* is originally Roman (probably from the Etruscan), it seems probable that it presented the idea of religion under some one of its bad aspects. Coleridge must quite have forgotten this Paganism of the word when he suggested, as a plausible idea, that originally it had presented religion under the aspect of a coercion or restraint. Morality having been viewed as the prime restraint or obligation resting upon man, then Coleridge thought that religion might have been viewed as a *religatio*, a reiterated restraint, or secondary obligation. This is ingenious, but it will not do. It is cracked in the ring. Perhaps as many as three objections might be mustered to such a derivation; but the last of the three is conclusive. The ancients never *did* view morality as a mode of obligation: I affirm this peremptorily, and with the more emphasis because there are great consequences suspended upon that question.

we will suppose the question to be proposed by an emissary from some remote planet,—who, knowing as yet absolutely nothing of us and our intellectual differences, must insist (as *I* insist) upon absolute precision, so that nothing essential shall be wanting, and nothing shall be redundant.

What, then, is religion? Decomposed into its elements, as they are found in Christianity, how many *powers* for acting on the heart of man does, by possibility, this great agency include? According to my own view, four.[1] I will state them, and number them.

1*st*, A form of worship, a *cultus*.

2*dly*, An idea of God; and (pointing the analysis to Christianity in particular) an idea not purified merely from ancient pollutions, but recast and absolutely born again.

3*dly*, An idea of the relation which man occupies to God: and of this idea also, when Christianity is the religion concerned, it must be said that it is so entirely remodelled as in no respect to resemble any element in any other religion. Thus far we are reminded of the poet's expression, "Pure religion *breathing* household laws"; that is, not *teaching* such laws, not formally *prescribing* a new economy of life, so much as *inspiring* it indirectly through a new atmosphere surrounding all objects with new attributes. But there is also in Christianity,

4*thly*, A *doctrinal* part, a part directly and explicitly occupied with *teaching*; and this divides into two great sections: *a*, A system of ethics so absolutely new as to be untranslateable[2] into either of the classical languages; and,

[1] "*Four*":—There are *six* in one sense of religion—viz., 5*thly*, corresponding moral affections; 6*thly*, a suitable life. But this applies to religion as *subjectively possessed* by a man, not to religion as *objectively contemplated*.

[2] "*Untranslateable*":—This is not generally perceived. On the contrary, people are ready to say, "Why, so far from it, the very earliest language in which the Gospels appeared, excepting only St. Matthew's, was the Greek." Yes, reader, but *what* Greek? Had not the Greeks been, for a long time, colonising Syria under princes of Grecian blood—had not the Greek language (as a *lingua Hellenistica*) become steeped in Hebrew ideas—no door of communication could have been opened between the new world of Christian feeling and the old world so deaf to its music. Here, therefore, we may observe two preparations made secretly by Providence for receiving Christianity

β, A system of mysteries,—as, for instance, the mystery of the Trinity, of the Divine Incarnation, of the Atonement, of the Resurrection, and others.

Here are great elements ; and now let me ask how many of these are found in the Heathen religion of Greece and Rome ? This is an important question ; it being my object to show that no religion *but* the Christian, and precisely through some one or two of its *differential* elements, could have been an organ of political movement.

Most divines who anywhere glance at this question are here found in what seems to me the deepest of errors. Great theologians are they, and eminent philosophers, who have presumed that (as a matter of course) all religions, however false, are introductory to some scheme of morality, however imperfect. They grant you that the morality is oftentimes unsound ; but still they think that some morality there must have been, or else for what purpose was the religion ? This I pronounce error.

All the moral theories of antiquity were utterly disjoined from religion. But this fallacy of a dogmatic or doctrinal part in Paganism is born out of Anachronism. It is the anachronism of unconsciously reflecting back upon the ancient religions of darkness, and as if essential to *all* religions, features that never were suspected as possible until they had been revealed in Christianity.[1] Religion, in the eye of a Pagan, had no more relation to morals than it had to shipbuilding or trigonometry. But, then, why was religion honoured amongst Pagans ? How did it ever arise ? What was its object ? Object ! it *had* no object ; if by this you mean ulterior object. Pagan religion arose in no motive,

and clearing the road before it : first, the diffusion of the Greek language through the whole civilised world (ἡ οἰκουμενη) some time before Christ, by which means the Evangelists found wings, as it were, for flying abroad through the kingdoms of the earth ; secondly, the Hebraising of this language, by which means the Evangelists found a new material made plastic and obedient to those new ideas which they had to build *with*, and which they had to build *upon*.

[1] "*In Christianity*" :—Once for all, to save the trouble of continual repetitions, understand Judaism to be commemorated jointly with Christianity—the dark root together with the golden fruitage—whenever the nature of the case does not presume a contradistinction of the one to the other.

but in an impulse. Pagan religion aimed at no distant prize ahead: it fled from a danger immediately behind. The gods of the Pagans were wicked natures; but they were natures to be feared, and to be propitiated; for they were fierce, and they were moody, and (as regarded man, who had no wings) they were powerful. Once accredited as facts, the Pagan gods could not be regarded as other than terrific facts; and thus it was that in terror, blind terror, as against power in the hands of divine wickedness, arose the ancient religions of Paganism. Because the gods were wicked, man was religious; because Olympus was cruel, Earth trembled; because the divine beings were the most lawless of Thugs, the human being became the most abject of sycophants.

Had the religions of Paganism arisen teleologically,—that is, with a view to certain purposes, to certain final causes ahead,—had they grown out of *forward*-looking views, contemplating, for instance, the furthering of civilisation, or contemplating some interests in a world beyond the present,—there would probably have arisen, concurrently, a section in all such religions dedicated to positive instruction. There would have been a *doctrinal* part. There might have been interwoven with the ritual of worship a system of economics, or a code of civil prudence, or a code of health, or a theory of morals, or even a secret revelation of mysterious relations between man and the Deity: all which existed in Judaism. But, as the case stood, this was impossible. The gods were mere odious facts, like scorpions or rattlesnakes, having no moral aspects whatever; public nuisances; and bearing no relation to man but that of capricious tyrants. First arising upon a basis of terror, these gods never subsequently enlarged that basis, nor sought to enlarge it. All antiquity contains no hint of a possibility that *love* could arise, as by any ray mingling with the sentiments in a human creature towards a divine one; not even sycophants ever pretended to *love* the gods.

Under this original peculiarity of Paganism, there arose two consequences, which I will mark by the Greek letters α and β. The latter I will notice in its order, first calling the reader's attention to the consequence marked α, which is this:—In the full and profoundest sense of the word *believe*,

the Pagans could not be said to believe in *any* gods ; but, in the ordinary sense, they did, and do, and must, believe in *all* gods. As this proposition will startle some readers, and is yet closely involved in the main truth which I am now pressing,—viz. the meaning and effect of a simple *cultus*, as distinguished from a high doctrinal religion,—let us seek an illustration from our Indian Empire. The Christian missionaries from home, when first opening their views to Hindoos, describe themselves as labouring to prove that Christianity is a *true* religion, and as either asserting, or leaving it to be inferred, that, on that assumption, the Hindoo religion is a false one. But the poor Hindoo never dreamed of doubting that the Christian was a true religion ; nor will he at all infer, from your religion being true, that his own must be false. Both are true, he thinks : all religions are true ; all gods are true gods ; and all are *equally* true. Neither can he understand what you mean by a false religion, or how a religion *could* be false ; and he is perfectly right. Wherever religions consist only of a worship, as the Hindoo religion does, there can be no competition amongst them as to truth. *That* would be an absurdity, not less nor other than it would be for a Prussian to denounce the Austrian emperor, or an Austrian to denounce the Prussian king, as a false sovereign. False ! *How* false ? In what sense false ? Surely not as non-existing. But, at least (the reader will reply), if the religions contradict each other one of them *must* be false. Yes ; but *that* is impossible. Two religions cannot contradict each other where both contain only a *cultus* : they could come into collision only by means of a doctrinal or directly affirmative part, like those of Christianity and Mohammedanism. But this part is what no idolatrous religion ever had, or will have. The reader must not understand me to mean that, merely as a compromise of courtesy, two professors of different idolatries would agree to recognise each other. Not at all. The truth of one does not imply the falsehood of the other. Both are true as *facts* : neither can be false in any higher sense, because neither makes any pretence to truth doctrinal.

This distinction between a religion having merely a

worship and a religion having also a body of doctrinal truth is familiar to the Mohammedans; and they convey the distinction by a very appropriate expression. Those majestic religions (as they esteem them) which rise above the mere pomps and tympanies of ceremonial worship they denominate "*Religions of the Book.*" There are of such religions three—viz. Judaism, Christianity, and Islamism. The first builds upon the Law and the Prophets, or perhaps sufficiently upon the Pentateuch; the second upon the Gospel; the last upon the Koran. No other religion can be said to rest upon a book, or to need a book, or even to admit of a book. For we must not be duped by the case where a lawgiver attempts to connect his own human institutes with the venerable sanctions of a national religion, or the case where a learned antiquary unfolds historically the record of a vast mythology. Heaps of such cases (both law and mythological records) survive in the Sanscrit, and in other Pagan languages. But these are books which build upon the religion, not books upon which the religion is built. If a religion consists only of a ceremonial worship, in that case there can be no opening for a book; because the forms and details publish themselves daily in the celebration of the worship, and are traditionally preserved from age to age without dependence on a book. But, if a religion has a doctrine, this implies a revelation or message from Heaven, which cannot in any other way secure the transmission of this message to future generations than by causing it to be registered in a book. A book, therefore, will be convertible with a doctrinal religion: no book, no doctrine; and, again, no doctrine, no book.

Upon these principles we may understand that second consequence (marked β) which has perplexed many men—viz. why it is that the Hindoos in our own times, but equally why it is that the Greek and Roman idolaters of antiquity, never proselytised,—no, nor could have viewed such an attempt as rational. Naturally, if a religion is doctrinal, any truth which it possesses, as a secret deposit consigned to its keeping by a revelation, must be equally valid for one man as for another, without regard to race or nation. For a *doctrinal* religion, therefore, to proselytise is

no more than a duty of consistent humanity. You, the professors of that religion, possess the medicinal fountains. You will not diminish your own share by imparting to others. What churlishness if you should grudge to others a health which does not interfere with your own! Christians, therefore, Mohammedans, and Jews originally, in proportion as they were sincere and conscientious, have always invited, or even forced, the unbelieving to their own faith: nothing but accidents of situation, local or political, have disturbed this effort. But, on the other hand, for a mere "*cultus*" to attempt conversions is nonsense. An ancient Roman could have had no motive for bringing you over to the worship of Jupiter Capitolinus; nor you any motive for going. "Surely, poor man," he would have said, "you have some god of your own, who will be quite as good for *your* countrymen as Jupiter for mine. But, if you have *not*, really I am sorry for your case; and a very odd case it is: but I don't see how it could be improved by talking nonsense. You cannot beneficially, you cannot rationally, worship a tutelary Roman deity, unless in the character of a Roman; and a Roman you may become, legally and politically. Being such, you will participate in all advantages, if any there *are*, of our national religion, and without needing a process of conversion, either in substance or in form. *Ipso facto*, and without any separate choice of your own, on becoming a Roman citizen, you become a party to the Roman worship." For an idolatrous religion to proselytise would therefore be not only useless, but unintelligible.

Now, having explained *that* point, which is a great step towards the final object of my paper—viz. the investigation of the reason why Christianity *is*, which no Pagan religion ever *has* been, an organ of political movement, I will go on to review rapidly those four constituents of a religion, as they are realised in Christianity, for the purpose of contrasting them with the false shadows, or even blank negations, of these constituents in Pagan idolatries.

First, then, as to the CULTUS, or form of the national worship:—In our Christian ritual I recognise these separate acts: viz. A, an act of Praise; B, an act of Thanksgiving; C, an act of Confession; D, an act of Prayer. In A we

commemorate with adoration the *general* perfections of the Deity. There all of us have an equal interest. In B we commemorate with thankfulness those special qualities of the Deity, or those special manifestations of them, by which we, the individual worshippers, have recently benefited. In C, by upright confession, we deprecate. In D we pray, or ask for the things which we need. Now, in the *cultus* of the ancient Pagans, B and C (the second act and the third) were wanting altogether. No thanksgiving ever ascended, on his own account, from the lips of an individual; and the state thanksgiving for a triumph of the national armies was but a mode of ostentatiously publishing the news. As to C, it is scarcely necessary to say that this was wanting, when I mention that penitential feelings were unknown amongst the ancients, and had no name; for *pœnitentia*[1] means *regret*, not *penitence*; and *me pœnitet hujus facti* means, "I rue this act in its consequences," not "I repent of this act for its moral nature." A and D, the first act and the last, *appear* to be present; but are so most imperfectly. When "God is praised aright," praised by means of such deeds or such attributes as express a Divine nature, we recognise one great function of a national worship—not otherwise. This, however, we must overlook and pardon, as being a fault essential to the religion: the poor creatures did the best they could to praise their god, lying under the curse of gods so thoroughly depraved. But in D the case is different. Strictly speaking, the ancients never prayed; and it may be doubted whether D approaches so near to what *we* mean by prayer as even by a mockery. You read of *preces*, of ἀραι, &c., and you are desirous to believe that Pagan supplications were not *always* corrupt. It is too shocking to suppose, in thinking of nations idolatrous, yet noble, that never *any* pure act of approach to the heavens took place on the part of man; that *always* the intercourse was corrupt; *always* doubly corrupt; that eternally the god was

[1] In Greek there is a word for repentance, but not until it had been re-baptized into a Christian use. *Metanoia*, however, is not that word: it is grossly to defeat the profound meaning of the New Testament if John the Baptist is translated as though summoning the world to *repentance*; it was not *that* to which he summoned them.

bought, and the votary was sold. Oh weariness of man's spirit before that unresting mercenariness in high places which, neither when his race clamoured for justice, nor when it languished for pity, would listen without hire! How gladly would man turn away from his false rapacious divinities to the godlike human heart, that so often would yield pardon *before* it was asked, and for the thousandth time that would give without a bribe! In strict propriety, as my reader knows, the classical Latin word for a prayer is *votum*; it was a case of contract, of mercantile contract; of that contract which the Roman law expressed by the formula —*Do ut des.* Vainly you came before the altars with empty hands. "But *my* hands are pure." Pure, indeed! would reply the scoffing god; let me see what they contain. It was exactly what you daily read in morning papers, viz.— that, in order to appear effectually before that Olympus in London which rains rarities upon us poor abject creatures in the provinces, you must enclose "an order on the Post-office or a reference." It is true that a man did not always register his *votum* (the particular offering which he vowed on the condition of receiving what he asked) at the moment of asking. Ajax, for instance, prays for light in the *Iliad*, and he does not then and there give either an order or a reference. But you are much mistaken if you fancy that even light was to be had *gratis*. It would be "carried to account." Ajax would be "debited" with that "advance."

Yet, when it occurs to a man that, in this *Do ut des*, the general *Do* was either a temple or a sacrifice, naturally it occurs to ask what *was* a sacrifice? I am afraid that the dark murderous nature of the Pagan gods is here made apparent. Modern readers, who have had no particular reason for reflecting on the nature and management of a sacrifice, totally misconceive it. They have a vague notion that the slaughtered animal was roasted, served up on the altars as a banquet to the gods; that these gods by some representative ceremony "made believe" to eat it; and that finally (as dishes that had now become hallowed to divine use) the several joints were disposed of in some mysterious manner: burned, suppose, or buried under the altars, or committed to the secret keeping of rivers. Nothing of the

sort: when a man made a sacrifice, the meaning was that he gave a dinner. And not only was every sacrifice a dinner-party, but every dinner-party was a sacrifice. This was strictly so in the good old ferocious times of Paganism, as may be seen in the *Iliad*: it was not said, "Agamemnon has a dinner-party to-day," but "Agamemnon sacrifices to Apollo." Even in Rome, to the last days of Paganism, it is probable that some slight memorial continued to connect the dinner-party (*cœna*) with a divine sacrifice; and thence partly arose the sanctity of the hospitable board; but to the east of the Mediterranean the full ritual of a sacrifice must have been preserved in all banquets, long after it had faded to a form in the less superstitious West. This we may learn from that point of casuistry treated by St. Paul—whether a Christian might lawfully eat of things offered to idols. The question was most urgent; because a Christian could not accept an invitation to dine with a Grecian fellow-citizen who still adhered to Paganism *without* eating things offered to idols. The whole banquet was dedicated to an idol. If he would not take *that*, he must continue *impransus*. Consequently the question virtually amounted to this: were the Christians to separate themselves altogether from those whose interests were in so many ways entangled with their own, on the single consideration that these persons were heathens? To refuse their hospitalities *was* to separate, and with a hostile expression of feeling. That would be to throw hindrances in the way of Christianity: the religion could not spread rapidly under such repulsive prejudices; and dangers that it became unchristian to provoke would thus multiply against the infant faith. This being so, and as the gods were really the only parties invited who got nothing at all of the banquet, it becomes a question of some interest,—what *did* they get? They were merely mocked if they had no compensatory interest in the dinner! For surely it was an inconceivable mode of honouring Jupiter that you and I should eat a piece of roast beef, leaving to the god's share only the mockery of a *Barmecide* invitation,[1]

[1] In the *Arabian Nights* a starving wretch, invited to dinner by Barmecide, is fooled by having nothing but empty plates set before him.—M.

assigning him a chair which everybody knew that he would never fill, and a plate which might as well have been filled with warm water? Jupiter got *something*, be assured; and what *was* it? This it was,—the luxury of inhaling the groans, the fleeting breath, the palpitations, the agonies, of the dying victim. This was the dark interest which the wretches of Olympus had in human invitations to dinner; and it is too certain, upon comparing facts and dates, that, when left to their own choice, the gods had a preference for *man* as the victim. All things concur to show that precisely as you ascend above civilisation, which continually increased the limitations upon the gods of Olympus, precisely as you go back to that gloomy state in which their true propensities had power to reveal themselves, was man the genuine victim for *them*, and the dying anguish of man the best "nidor" that ascended from earthly banquets to *their* nostrils. Their stern eyes smiled darkly upon the throbbings of tortured flesh, as in Moloch's ears dwelt like music the sound of infants' wailings.

Secondly, as to the birth of a new idea respecting the nature of God:—It may not have occurred to every reader, but none will perhaps object to it when once suggested to his consideration, that, as is the god of any nation, such will be that nation. God, however falsely conceived of by man, even though splintered into fragments by Polytheism, or disfigured by the darkest mythologies, is still the greatest of all objects offered to human contemplation. Man, when thrown upon his own delusions, may have raised to himself, or may have adopted from others, the very falsest of ideals as the true image and reflection of what he calls god. In his lowest condition of darkness terror may be the moulding principle for spiritual conceptions,—power the engrossing attribute which he ascribes to his deity; and this power may be hideously capricious, or associated with vindictive cruelty. It may even happen that his standard of what is highest in the divinity should be capable of falling greatly below what an enlightened mind would figure to itself as lowest in man. A more shocking monument, indeed, there cannot be than this, of the infinity by which man may descend below his own capacities of grandeur: the gods, in some systems of

religion, have been such and so monstrous by excesses of wickedness as to insure, if annually one hour of periodical eclipse should have left them at the mercy of man, a general rush from their own worshippers for strangling them as mad dogs. Hypocrisy, the cringing of sycophants, and the credulities of fear, united to conceal this misotheism; but we may be sure that it was widely diffused through the sincerities of the human heart. An intense desire for kicking Jupiter, or for hanging him, if found convenient, must have lurked in the honourable Roman heart, before the sincerity of human nature could have extorted upon the Roman stage a public declaration that their supreme gods were capable of enormities which a poor, unpretending human creature (*homuncio*) would have disdained. Many times the ideal of the divine nature, as adopted by Pagan races, fell under the contempt, not only of men superior to the national superstition, but of men partaking in that superstition. Yet, with all those drawbacks, an ideal *was* an ideal. The being set up for adoration as god *was* such upon the whole to the worshipper; since, if there had been any higher mode of excellence conceivable for *him*, that higher mode would have virtually become his deity. It cannot be doubted, therefore, that the nature of the national divinities indicated the qualities which ranked highest in the national estimation, and that, being contemplated continually in the spirit of veneration, these qualities must have worked an extensive conformity to their own standard. The mythology sanctioned by the ritual of public worship, the features of moral nature in the gods distributed through that mythology, and sometimes commemorated by gleams in that ritual, domineered over the popular heart, even in those cases where the religion had been a derivative religion, and not originally moulded by impulses breathing from the native disposition. So that, upon the whole, such as were the gods of a nation, such was the nation: given the particular idolatry, it became possible to decipher the character of the idolaters. Where Moloch was worshipped, the people would naturally be found cruel; where the Paphian Venus, it could not be expected that they should escape the taint of a voluptuous effeminacy.

Against this principle there could have been no room

for demur, were it not through that inveterate prejudice besieging the modern mind,—as though all religion, however false, implied some scheme of morals connected with it. However imperfectly discharged, one function even of the Pagan priest (it is supposed) must have been—to guide, to counsel, to exhort, as a teacher of morals. And, had *that* been so, the practical precepts, and the moral commentary coming after even the grossest forms of worship or the most revolting mythological legends, might have operated to neutralise their horrors, or even to allegorise them into better meanings. Lord Bacon, as a trial of skill, has attempted something of that sort in his *Wisdom of the Ancients*. But all this is modern refinement, either in the spirit of playful ingenuity or of ignorance. I have said sufficiently that there was no *doctrinal* part in the religion of the Pagans. There was a *cultus*, or ceremonial worship: *that* constituted the sum-total of religion in the idea of a Pagan. There was a necessity, for the sake of guarding its traditional usages, and upholding and supporting its pomp, that official persons should preside in this *cultus*: *that* constituted the duty of the priest. Beyond this ritual of public worship, there was nothing at all; nothing to believe, nothing to understand. A set of legendary tales undoubtedly there was, connected with the mythologic history of each separate deity. But in what sense you understood these, or whether you were at all acquainted with them, was a matter of indifference to the priests; since many of these legends were variously related, and some had apparently been propagated in ridicule of the gods rather than in their honour.

With Christianity a new scene was opened. In this religion the *cultus*, or form of worship, was not even the primary business, far less was it the exclusive business. The worship flowed as a direct consequence from the new idea exposed of the divine nature, and from the new idea of man's relations to this nature. Here were suddenly unmasked great doctrines, truths positive and directly avowed; whereas, in Pagan forms of religion, any notices which then were, or seemed to be, of circumstances surrounding the gods, related only to matters of fact or accident, such as that a particular god was the son or the nephew of some other god, — a

truth, if it *were* a truth, wholly impertinent to any interest of man.

As there are some important truths, dimly perceived or not at all, lurking in the idea of God—an idea too vast to be navigable as yet by the human understanding, yet here and there to be coasted—I wish at this point to direct the reader's attention upon a passage which he may happen to remember in Sir Isaac Newton. The passage occurs at the end of the *Optics*, and the exact expressions I do not remember; but the sense is what I am going to state:—Sir Isaac is speaking of God; and he takes occasion to say that God is not good, but goodness; is not holy, but holiness; is not infinite, but infinity. This, I apprehend, will have struck many readers as merely a rhetorical *bravura*; sublime, perhaps, and fitted to exalt the feeling of awe connected with so unapproachable a mystery, but otherwise not throwing any new light upon the darkness of the idea as a problem before the intellect. Yet indirectly perhaps it *does*, when brought out into its latent sense by placing it in juxtaposition with Paganism. If a philosophic theist who is also a Christian, or who (*not* being a Christian) has yet by his birth and breeding become saturated with Christian ideas and feelings,[1] attempts to realise the idea of supreme Deity, he becomes aware of a double and contradictory movement in his own mind whilst striving towards that result. He demands, in the first place, something in the highest degree generic, and yet again, in the opposite direction, something in the highest degree individual; he demands on the one path a vast ideality, and yet on the other in union with a determinate personality. He must not

[1] "*Not being a Christian, has yet become saturated with Christian ideas*":—This case is far from uncommon; and undoubtedly, from having too much escaped observation, it has been the cause of much error. Poets I could mention, if it were not invidious to do so, who, whilst composing in a spirit of burning enmity to the Christian faith, yet rested for the very sting of their pathos upon ideas that but for Christianity could never have existed. Translators there have been, English, French, German, of Mohammedan books, who have so coloured the whole vein of thinking with sentiments peculiar to Christianity as to draw from a reflecting reader the exclamation, "If this can be indeed the product of Islamism, wherefore should Christianity exist? If thoughts so divine can indeed belong to a false religion, what more could we gain from a true one?"

surrender himself to the first impulse, else he is betrayed into a mere *anima mundi*; he must not surrender himself to the second, else he is betrayed into something merely human. This difficult antagonism of what is most and what is least generic must be maintained; otherwise the idea, the possible idea, of that august unveiling which takes place in the Judaico-Christian God is absolutely in clouds. Now, this antagonism utterly collapses in Paganism. And to a philosophic apprehension this peculiarity of the heathen gods is more shocking and fearful than what at first sight had seemed most so. When a man pauses for the purpose of attentively reviewing the Pantheon of Greece and Rome, what strikes him at the first with most depth of impression and with most horror is the *wickedness* of this Pantheon. And he observes with surprise that this wickedness, which is at a furnace-heat in the superior gods, becomes fainter and paler as you descend. Amongst the semi-deities, such as the Oreads or Dryads, the Nereids or Naiads, he feels not at all offended. The odour of corruption, the *sæva mephitis*, has by this time exhaled. The uproar of eternal outrage has ceased. And these gentle divinities, if too human and too beset with infirmities, are not impure, and not vexed with ugly appetites, nor instinct of quarrel: they are tranquil as are the hills and the forests; passionless as are the seas and the fountains which they tenant. But, when he ascends to the *dii majorum gentium*, to those twelve gods of the supreme house who may be called, in respect of rank, the Paladins of the classical Pantheon, secret horror comes over him at the thought that demons, reflecting the worst aspects of brutal races, ever *could* have levied worship from his own. It is true they do so no longer as regards *our* planet. But what *has* been apparently *may* be. God made the Greeks and Romans of one blood with himself; he cannot deny that *intellectually* the Greeks—he cannot deny that *morally* the Romans—were amongst the foremost of human races; and he trembles in thinking that abominations, whose smoke ascended through so many ages to the *supreme* heavens, may, or might, so far as human resistance is concerned, again become the law for the noblest of his species. A deep feeling, it is true, exists latently in human beings of something

perishable in evil. Whatsoever is founded in wickedness, according to a deep misgiving dispersed amongst men, must be tainted with corruption. *There* might seem consolation; but a man who reflects is not quite so sure of *that*. As a commonplace resounding in schools, it may be justly current amongst us that what is evil by nature or by origin must be transient. But *that* may be because evil in all human things is partial, is heterogeneous,—evil mixed with good,—and the two natures, by their mutual enmity, must enter into a collision which may possibly guarantee the final destruction of the whole compound. Such a result may not threaten a nature that is purely and totally evil, that is *homogeneously* evil. Dark natures there may be whose *essence* is evil, that may have an abiding root in the system of the universe not less awfully exempt from change than the mysterious foundations of God.

This is dreadful. Wickedness that is immeasurable, in connexion with power that is superhuman, appals the imagination. Yet this is a combination that might easily have been conceived; and a wicked god still commands a mode of reverence. But that feature of the Pagan Pantheon which I am contrasting with this,—viz. that no Pagan deity is an *abstraction*, but a vile *concrete*,—impresses myself with a subtler sense of horror, because it blends the hateful with a mode of the ludicrous. For the sake of explaining myself to the non-philosophic reader, I beg him to consider what is the sort of feeling with which he regards an ancient river-god or the presiding nymph of a fountain. The impression which he receives is pretty much like that from the monumental figure of some allegoric being, such as Faith or Hope, Fame or Truth. He hardly believes that the most superstitious Grecian seriously believed in such a being as a distinct personality. He feels convinced that the sort of personal existence ascribed to such an abstraction, as well as the human shape, are merely modes of representing and drawing into unity a variety of phenomena and agencies that seem *one* by means of their unintermitting continuity, and because they tend to one common purpose. Now, from such a symbolic god as this let him pass to Jupiter or Mercury, and instantly he becomes aware of a revolting individuality.

He sees before him the opposite pole of deity. The river-god had too little of a concrete character. Jupiter has nothing else. In Jupiter you read no incarnation of any abstract quality whatever: he represents nothing whatever in the metaphysics of the universe. Except for the accident of his power, he is merely a man. He has a *character*,—that is, a tendency or determination to this quality or that in excess; whereas a nature truly divine must be *in equilibrio* as to all qualities, and comprehend them all, in the way that a *genus* comprehends the subordinate *species*. He has even a personal history; he has passed through certain adventures, faced certain dangers, and survived hostilities that, at one time, were doubtful in their issue. No trace, in short, appears, in any Grecian god, of the generic,—whereas we, in our Christian ideas of God, unconsciously, and without thinking of Sir Isaac Newton, realise Sir Isaac's conceptions. We think of Him as having a sort of allegoric generality, liberated from the bonds of the individual, and yet, also, as the most awful among natures, having a conscious personality. He is diffused through all things, present everywhere, and yet not the less present locally. He is at a distance unapproachable by finite creatures; and yet, without any contradiction (as the profound St. Paul observes), "not very far" from every one of us. And I will venture to say that many a poor old woman has, by virtue of her Christian inoculation, Sir Isaac's great idea lurking in her mind: as, for instance, in relation to any of God's attributes,—suppose holiness or happiness,—she feels (though analytically she could not explain) that God is not holy or is not happy by way of participation, after the manner of other beings; that is, He does not draw happiness from a fountain separate and external to Himself and common to other creatures, He drawing more and they drawing less; but that He Himself *is* the Fountain; that no other being can have the least proportion of either one or the other but by drawing from that Fountain; that as to all other good gifts, that as to life itself, they are in man not on any separate tenure, not primarily but derivatively, and only in so far as God enters into the nature of man; that "we live and move" only so far and so long as the incomprehensible union takes place

between the human spirit and the fontal abyss of the Divine. In short, here, and here only, is found the outermost expansion, the centrifugal, of the τὸ catholic, united with the innermost centripetal of the personal consciousness. Had, therefore, the Pagan gods been less detestable, neither impure nor malignant, they could not have won a salutary veneration, being so merely concrete individuals.

Next, it must have degraded the gods (and have made them instruments of degradation for man) that they were, one and all, incarnations,—not, as even the Christian God is, for a transitory moment and for an eternal purpose, but essentially and by overruling necessity. The Greeks could not conceive of spirituality. Neither can *we*, metaphysically, assign the conditions of the spiritual ; but practically we all feel and represent to our own minds the agencies of God as liberated from bonds of space and time, of flesh and of resistance. This the Greeks could *not* feel, could *not* represent. And the only advantage which the gods enjoyed over the worm and the grub was that they (or at least the Paladins amongst them, the twelve supreme gods) could pass fluently from one incarnation to another.

Thirdly, out of that essential bondage to flesh arose a dreadful suspicion of something worse. In what relation did the Pagan gods stand to the abominable phenomenon of death ? It is not by uttering pompous flatteries of ever-living and ἀμβροτος ἀει, &c., that a poet could intercept the searching jealousies of human penetration. These are merely oriental forms of compliment. And here, by the way, as elsewhere, we find Plato vehemently confuted ; for it was the undue exaltation of the gods, and not their degradation, which must be ascribed to the frauds of poets. Tradition, and no poetic tradition, absolutely pointed to the grave of more gods than one. But, waiving all *that* as liable to dispute, one thing we know, from the ancients themselves, as open to no question, that all the gods were *born* ; were born infants ; passed through the stages of helplessness and growth : from all which the inference was but too fatally obvious. Besides, there were grandfathers, and even great-grandfathers, in the Pantheon : some of these were confessedly superannuated ; nay, some had disappeared. Even

men, who knew but little of Olympian records, knew this at least for certain, that more than one dynasty of gods had passed over the golden stage of Olympus, had made their *exit*, and were hurrying onward to oblivion. It was matter of notoriety, also, that all these gods were and had been liable to the taint of sorrow for the death of their earthly children (as the Homeric Jupiter for Sarpedon, Thetis for Achilles, Calliope in Euripides for her blooming Rhesus); all were liable to fear; all to physical pain; all to anxiety; all to the indefinite menaces of a danger[1] not measurable. Looking backwards or looking forwards, the gods beheld enemies that attacked their existence, or modes of decay (known and unknown) which gnawed at their roots. All this I take the trouble to insist upon: not as though it could be worth any man's trouble, at this day, to expose (on its own account) the frailty of the Pantheon, but with a view to the closer estimate of the Divine idea amongst men, and by way of contrast to the power of that idea under Christianity: since I contend that, such as is the God of every people, such, in the corresponding features of character, will be that people. If the god (like Moloch) is fierce, the people will be cruel; if (like Typhon) a destroying energy, the people will be gloomy; if (like the Paphian Venus) libidinous, the people will be voluptuously effeminate. When the gods are perishable, man cannot have the grandeurs of his nature developed; when the shadow of death sits upon the highest of what man represents to himself as celestial, essential blight will sit for ever upon human aspirations. One thing only remains to be added on this subject. Why were not the ancients more profoundly afflicted by the treacherous gleams of mortality in their gods? How was it that they could forget, for a moment, a revelation so full of misery, since not only the character of man partly depended upon the quality of his god, but also, and *a fortiori*, his destiny upon

[1] "*Danger not measurable*":—It must not be forgotten that all the superior gods passed through an infancy (as Jove, &c.), or even an adolescence (as Bacchus), or even a maturity (as the majority of Olympus during the insurrection of the Titans), surrounded by perils that required not strength only, but artifice, and even abject self-concealment, to evade.

the destiny of his god? But the reason of his indifference to the divine mortality was because, *at any rate*, the Pagan man's connexion with the gods terminated at his own death. Even selfish men would reconcile themselves to an earthquake which should swallow up all the world; and the most unreasonable man has professed his readiness, at all times, to die with a dying universe,—*mundo secum pereunte mori.*

III. But, *thirdly*, the gods being such, in what relation to them did man stand? It is a fact hidden from the mass of the ancients themselves, but sufficiently attested, that there was an ancient and secret enmity between the whole family of the gods and the human race. This is confessed by Herodotus as a persuasion spread through some of the nations amongst which he travelled. There was a sort of truce, indeed, between the parties; temples, with their religious services, and their votive offerings, recorded this truce. But below all these appearances lay deadly enmity, to be explained only by one who should know the mysterious history of both parties from the eldest times. It is extraordinary, however, that Herodotus should rely for this account upon the belief of distant nations, when the same belief was so deeply recorded amongst his own countrymen in the sublime story of Prometheus. Much[1] of the sufferings endured by Prometheus was on account of Man, whom he had befriended, and, *by* befriending, had defeated the malignity of Jove. According to some, Man was even created by Prometheus; but no accounts, until lying Platonic philosophers arose in far later times, represented Man as created by Jupiter.

Now let us turn to Christianity, pursuing it through the functions which it exercises in common with Paganism, and also through those which it exercises separately and incommunicably.

I. As to the *Idea of God.*—How great was the chasm dividing the Hebrew God from all gods of idolatrous birth, and with what starry grandeur this revelation of *Supreme*

[1] "*Much,*"—not all: for part was due to the obstinate concealment from Jupiter by Prometheus of the danger which threatened his throne in a coming generation.

Deity must have wheeled upwards into the field of human contemplation when first surmounting the steams of earth-born heathenism, I need not impress upon any Christian audience. To their *knowledge* little could be added. Yet to *know* is not always to *feel*; and without a correspondent depth of feeling there is in moral cases no effectual knowledge. Not the understanding is sufficient upon such ground, but that which the Scriptures in their profound philosophy entitle the "understanding heart." And perhaps few readers will have adequately appreciated the prodigious change effected in the theatre of the human spirit by the transition, sudden as the explosion of light, in the Hebrew cosmogony, when, from the caprice of a fleshly god, in one hour man mounted to a justice that knew no shadow of change; from cruelty mounted to a love which was inexhaustible; from gleams of *essential* evil to a holiness that could not be fathomed; from a power and a knowledge under limitations so merely and obviously[1] human to the same agencies lying underneath creation as a root below a plant. Not less awful in power was the transition from the limitations of space and time to ubiquity and eternity, from the familiar to the mysterious, from the incarnate to the spiritual. These enormous transitions were fitted to work changes of answering magnitude in the human spirit. The reader can hardly make any mistake as to this. He *must* concede the changes. What he will be likely to misconceive, unless he has reflected, is the immensity of these changes. And another mistake, which he is even more likely to make, is this: he will imagine that a new idea, even though the idea of an object so vast as God, cannot become the ground of any revolution more than intellectual, —cannot revolutionise the moral and active principles in man,—consequently cannot lay the ground of any political movement. We shall see. But next, that is,—

[1] "*So merely and obviously human*":—It is a natural thought, to any person who has not explored these recesses of human degradation, that surely the Pagans must have had it in their power to invest their gods with all conceivable perfections, quite as much as we that are *not* Pagans. The thing wanting to the Pagans, he will think, was the *right*: otherwise as regarded the *power*.

II. Secondly, as to the idea of man's relation to God.—This, were it capable of disjunction, would be even more of a revolutionary idea than the idea of God. But the one idea is enlinked with the other. In Paganism, as I have said, the higher you ascend towards the original fountains of the religion, the more you leave behind the frauds, forgeries, and treacheries of philosophy, so much the more clearly you descry the odious truth that man stood in the relation of a superior to his gods, as respected all moral qualities of any value, but in the relation of an inferior as respected physical power. This was a position of the two parties fatal, by itself, to all grandeur of moral aspirations. Whatever was good or corrigibly bad man saw associated with weakness; and power was sealed and guaranteed to absolute wickedness. The evil disposition in man to worship success was strengthened by this mode of superiority in the gods. Merit was disjoined from prosperity. Even merit of a lower class, merit in things morally indifferent, was not so decidedly on the side of the gods as to reconcile man to the reasonableness of their yoke. They were compelled to acquiesce in a government which they did not regard as just. The gods were stronger, but not much; they had the unfair advantage of standing over the heads of men, and of wings for flight or for manœuvring. Yet, even so, it was clearly the opinion of Homer's age that in a fair fight the gods might have been found liable to defeat. The gods again were generally beautiful: but not more so than the *élite* of mankind; else why did these gods, both male and female, continually persecute our race with their odious love? which love, be it observed, uniformly brought ruin upon its objects. Intellectually the gods were undoubtedly below men. They pretended to no great works in philosophy, in legislation, or in the fine arts, except only that, as to one of these arts, viz. poetry, a single god vaunted himself greatly in simple ages. But he attempted neither a tragedy nor an epic poem. Even in what he did attempt it is worth while to follow his career. His literary fate was what might have been expected. After the Persian War the reputation of his verses rapidly decayed. Wits arose in Athens who laughed so furiously at his style and his metre in the Delphic oracles

that at length some echoes of their scoffing began to reach Delphi; upon which the god and his inspired ministers became sulky, and finally took refuge in prose, as the only shelter they could think of from the caustic venom of Athenian malice.

These were the miserable relations of Man to the Pagan gods. Everything which it is worth doing at all man could do better. Now, it is some feature of alleviation in a servile condition if the lord appears by natural endowments superior to his slave; or at least it embitters the degradation of slavery if he does *not*. Greatly, therefore, must human interests have suffered had this jealous approximation of the two parties been the sole feature noticeable in the relations between them. But there was a worse. There was an original enmity between Man and the Pantheon: not the sort of enmity which we Christians ascribe to our God; *that* is but a figure of speech, and even there is a derivative enmity, an enmity founded on something in man *subsequent* to his creation, and having a ransom annexed to it. But the enmity of the heathen gods was original—that is, to the very nature of Man, and as though Man had in some stage of his career been their rival; which indeed he was if we adopt Milton's hypothesis of the gods as Ruined Angels, and of Man as created to supply the vacancy thus arising in Heaven.

Now, from this dreadful scheme of relations between the human and divine under Paganism turn to the relations under Christianity. It is remarkable that even here, according to a doctrine current amongst many of the elder divines, Man was naturally superior to the race of beings immediately ranking above him. Jeremy Taylor notices the obscure tradition that the angelic order was, by original constitution, inferior to man; but this original precedency had been reversed for the present by the fact that man, in his higher nature, was morally ruined, whereas the angelic race had not forfeited the perfection of *their* nature, though otherwise an inferior nature. Waiving a question so inscrutable as this, we know, at least, that no allegiance or homage is required from man towards this doubtfully superior race. And, when man first finds himself called upon to pay tributes of this nature as to a being illimitably his superior,

he is at the same moment taught by a revelation that this awful superior is the same who created him, and that, in a sense more than figurative, he himself is the child of God. There stand the two relations, as declared in Paganism and in Christianity,—both probably true. In the former man is the essential enemy of the gods, though sheltered by some conventional arrangement; in the latter he is the son of God. In his own image God made him; and the very central principle of his religion is that God for a great purpose assumed his own human nature: a mode of incarnation which could not be conceivable unless through some divine principle common to the two natures and forming the *nexus* between them.

With these materials it is, and others resembling these, that Christianity has carried forward the work of human progression. The ethics of Christianity it was,—new ethics and unintelligible, in a degree as yet but little understood, to the old Pagan nations,—which furnished the rudder or guidance for a human revolution; but the mysteries of Christianity it was,—new Eleusinian shows, presenting God under a new form and aspect, presenting Man under a new relation to God,—which furnished the oars and sails, the moving forces, for the advance of this revolution.

It was my intention to have shown how this great idea of man's relation to God, connected with the previous idea of God, had first caused the state of *slavery* to be regarded as an evil. Next, I proposed to show how *charitable institutions*, not one of which existed in Pagan ages,—hospitals, and asylums of all classes,—had arisen under the same idea brooding over man from age to age. Thirdly, I should have attempted to show that from the same mighty influence had grown up a *social* influence of woman which did not exist in Pagan ages, and will hereafter be applied to greater purposes. But, for want of room, I confine myself to saying a few words on War, and the mode in which it will be extinguished by Christianity.

War.—This is amongst the foremost of questions that concern human progress; and it is one which, of all great questions (the question of slavery not excepted, nor even the question of the slave-*trade*), has travelled forward the most

rapidly into public favour. Thirty years ago there was hardly a breath stirring against war, as the sole natural resource of national anger or national competition. Hardly did a wish rise, at intervals, in that direction, or even a protesting sigh over the calamities of war. And, if here and there a contemplative author uttered such a sigh, it was in the spirit of mere hopeless sorrow, that mourned over an evil apparently as inalienable from man as hunger, as death, as the frailty of human expectations. Cowper, about sixty years ago, had said—

> "War is a game which, were their subjects wise,
> Kings would not play at." [1]

But Cowper would not have said this had he not been nearly related to the Whig house of Panshanger. Every Whig thought it a duty occasionally to look fiercely at kings, saying—"D——, who's afraid?" pretty much as a regular John Bull, in the lower classes, expresses his independence by defying the peerage.—"A lord! do you say? what care I for a lord? I value a lord no more than a button top"; whilst, in fact, he secretly reveres a lord as being usually amongst the most ancient of landed proprietors, and, secondly, amongst the richest. The scourge of kingship was what Cowper glanced at, rather than the scourge of war; and, in any case, the condition which he annexed to his suggestion of relief is too remote to furnish much consolation for cynics like myself or the reader. If war is to cease only when subjects become wise, we need not contract the scale of our cannon-foundries until the millennium. Sixty years ago, therefore, the abolition of war looked as unprosperous a speculation as Dr. Darwin's scheme for improving our British climate by hauling out all the icebergs from the polar basin in seasons when the wind sate fair for the tropics [2]; by which means these wretched annoyers of our peace would soon find themselves in quarters too hot to hold them, and would disappear as rapidly as sugar-candy in children's mouths. Others, however, inclined rather to the Ancient Mariner's scheme, by shooting an albatross:—

[1] Lines 187, 188 of Book V of *The Task*.—M.
[2] Dr. Erasmus Darwin (1731-1802).—M.

"'Twas right, said they, such birds to shoot,
That bring the frost and snow."

Scarcely more hopeless than these crusades against frost were any of the serious plans which had then been proposed for the extirpation of war. St. Pierre contributed "*son petit possible*" to this desirable end, in the shape of an essay towards the idea of a perpetual peace[1]; Kant, the great professor of Königsberg, subscribed to the same benevolent scheme *his* little essay under the same title[2]; and others in England subscribed a guinea each to the fund for the suppression of war. These efforts, one and all, spent their fire as vainly as Darwin spent his wrath against the icebergs. The icebergs are as big and as cold as ever; and war is still, like a basking snake, ready to rear his horrid crest on the least rustling in the forests.

But in quarters more powerful than either purses of gold or scholastic reveries there has, since the days of Kant and Cowper, begun to gather a menacing thundercloud against war. The nations, or at least the great leading nations, are beginning to set their faces against it. War, it is felt, comes under the denunciation of Christianity, by the havoc which it causes amongst those who bear God's image; of Political Economy, by its destruction of property and human labour; of rational logic, by the frequent absurdity of its pretexts. The wrong which is put forth as the ostensible ground of the particular war is oftentimes not of a nature to be redressed by war, or is even forgotten in the course of the war; and, secondly, the war prevents another course which *might* have redressed the wrong—viz. temperate negotiation, or neutral arbitration. These things were always true, and indeed, heretofore, more flagrantly true: but the difference in favour of our own times is that they are now felt to be true. Formerly the truths were seen, but not felt: they were inoperative truths, lifeless, and unvalued. Now, on the other hand, in England, America, France, societies are rising for making war upon war; and it is a striking proof of the progress made by such societies that, some two years ago, a

[1] Abbé Charles Rénée Castel de Saint-Pierre, born 1658, died 1743: author of *Projet de Paix Perpetuelle*.—M.

[2] See *ante*, pp. 118-125.—M.

deputation from one of them, being presented to King Louis Philippe, received from him—not the sort of vague answer which might have been expected, but a sincere one, expressed in very encouraging words.[1] Ominous to himself this might have been thought by the superstitious who should happen to recollect the sequel to a French king of the very earliest movement in this direction. The great (but to this hour mysterious) design of Henry IV in 1610 was supposed by many to be a plan of this very nature, for enforcing a general and permanent peace on Christendom by means of an armed intervention; and no sooner had it partially transpired, through traitorous evidence or through angry suspicion, than his own assassination followed.

Shall I offend the reader by doubting, after all, whether war is not an evil still destined to survive through several centuries? Great progress has already been made. In the two leading nations of the earth war can no longer be made with the levity which provoked Cowper's words two generations back. France is too ready to fight for mere bubbles of what she calls glory. But neither in France nor England could a war now be undertaken without a warrant from the *popular* voice. This is a great step in advance; but the final step for its extinction will be taken by a new and Christian code of international law. This cannot be consummated until Christian philosophy shall have traversed the earth and re-organised the structure of society.

But, finally, and (as regards extent, though not as regards intensity of effect) far beyond all other political powers of Christianity, is the power, the *demiurgic* power of this religion over the kingdoms of human opinion. Did it ever strike the reader that the Greeks and Romans, although so frantically republican, and, in *some* of their institutions, so democratic, yet, on the other hand, never developed the idea of *representative* government, either as applied to legislation or to

[1] "*Encouraging words*":—And rather presumptuous words, if the newspapers reported them correctly: for they went the length of promising that he, separately, as King of the French, would coerce Europe into peace. But, from the known good sense of the king, it is more probable that he promised his *negative* aid,—the aid of not personally concurring to any war which might otherwise be attractive to the French Government.

administration? The elective principle was widely used amongst them. Nay, the nicer casuistries of this principle had been latterly discussed. The separate advantages of open or of secret voting had been the subject of keen dispute in the political circles of Rome; and the art was well understood of disturbing the natural course of the public suffrage by varying the modes of combining the voters under the different forms of the Comitia. Public authority and jurisdiction were created and modified by the elective principle; but never was this principle applied to the creation or direction of public opinion. The Senate of Rome, for instance, like our own sovereign, represented the national majesty, and, to a certain degree, continued to do so for centuries after this majesty had received a more immediate representative in the person of the reigning Cæsar. The senate, like our own sovereign, represented the grandeur of the nation, the hospitality of the nation to illustrious strangers, and the gratitude of the nation in the distribution of honours. For the Senate continued to be the fountain of honours, even to Cæsar himself: the titles of Germanicus, Britannicus, Dalmaticus, &c. (which may be viewed as peerages), the privilege of precedency, the privilege of wearing a laurel diadem, &c. (which may be viewed as the Garter, Bath, Thistle), all were honours conferred by the Senate. But the Senate, no more than our own sovereign, ever represented, by any one act or function, the public opinion. How was this? Strange, indeed, that so mighty a secret as that of delegating public opinions to the custody of elect representatives, a secret which has changed the face of the world, should have been missed by nations applying so vast an energy to the whole theory of public administration. But the truth, however paradoxical, is, that in Greece and Rome no body of public opinions existed that could have furnished a standing-ground for adverse parties, or that consequently could have required to be represented. In all the dissensions of Rome, from the secessions of the Plebs to the factions of the Gracchi, of Marius and Sylla, of Cæsar and Pompey,—in all the στασεις of the Grecian republics,—the contest could no more be described as a contest of opinion than could the feuds of our buccaneers in the seventeenth century, when parting com-

pany, or fighting for opposite principles of dividing the general booty. One faction has, another sought to have, a preponderant share of power; but these struggles never took the shape, even in pretence, of differences that moved through the conflict of principles. The case was always the simple one of power matched against power, faction against faction, usage against innovation. It was not that the patricians deluded themselves by any speculative views into the refusal of intermarriages with the plebeians: it was not as upon any opinion that they maintained the contest (such as at this day divides ourselves from the French upon the question of opinion with regard to the social rank of literary men), but simply as upon a fact: they appealed to evidences, not to speculations; to usage, not to argument. They were in possession, and fought against change, not as inconsistent with a theory, but as hostility to an interest. In the contest of Cæsar with the oligarchic knavery of Cicero, Cato, and Pompey, no possible exercise of representative functions (had the people possessed them) could have been applied beneficially to the settlement of the question at issue. Law and the abuses of law, good statutes and evil customs, had equally thrown the public power into a settlement fatal to the public welfare. Not any decay of public virtue, but increase of poverty amongst the inferior citizens, had thrown the suffrages, and consequently the honours and powers of the state, into the hands of some forty or fifty houses, rich enough to bribe, and bribing systematically. Cæsar, undertaking to correct a state of disease which would else have convulsed the republic every third year by civil war, knew that no arguments could be available against a competition of mere interests. The remedy lay, not through opposition speeches in the senate, or from the rostra,—not through pamphlets or journals,—but through a course of intense cudgelling. This he happily accomplished; and by that means restored Rome for centuries, —not to the aspiring condition which she once held, but to an immunity from annual carnage, and in other respects to a condition of prosperity which, if less than during her popular state, was greater than any else attainable after that popular state had become impossible from changes in the composition of society.

Here, and in all other critical periods of ancient republics, we shall find that opinions did not exist as the grounds of feud, nor could by any dexterity have been applied to the settlement of feuds. Whereas, on the other hand, with ourselves for centuries, and latterly with the French, no public contest has arisen, or does now exist, without fighting its way through every stage of advance by appeals to public opinion. If, for instance, an improved tone of public feeling calls for a gradual mitigation of army punishments, the quarrel becomes instantly an intellectual one; and much information is brought forward which throws light upon human nature generally. But in Rome such a discussion would have been stopped summarily, as interfering with the discretional power of the Prætorium. To take the *vitis* or cane from the hands of the centurion was a perilous change, but, perilous or not, must be committed to the judgment of the particular imperator, or of his legatus. The executive business of the Roman exchequer, again, could not have been made the subject of public discussion; not only because no sufficient material for judgment could, under the want of a public press, have been gathered, except from the parties interested in all its abuses, but also because these parties (a faction amongst the equestrian order) could have effectually overthrown any counter-faction formed amongst parties not personally *affected* by the question. The Roman institution of *clientela*,—which had outlived its early uses,—does anybody imagine that this was open to investigation? The influence of murderous riots would easily have been brought to bear upon it, but not the light of public opinion. Even if public opinion could have been evoked in those days, or trained to combined action, insuperable difficulties would have arisen in adjusting its force to the necessities of the Roman provinces and allies. Any arrangement that was practicable would have obtained an influence for these parties, either dangerous to the supreme section of the empire, or else nugatory for each of themselves. It is a separate consideration that, through total defect of cheap instruments for communication, whether personally or in the way of thought, public opinion must always have moved in the dark: what I chiefly assert is that the feuds bearing at all

upon public interests never *did* turn, or could have turned, upon any collation of opinions. And two things must strengthen the reader's conviction upon this point: viz., first, that no public meetings (such as with us carry on the weight of public business throughout the empire) were ever called in Rome; secondly, that in the regular and "official" meetings of the people no *social* interest was ever discussed, but only some *political* interest.

Now, on the other hand, amongst ourselves, every question that is large enough to engage public interest, though it should begin as a mere comparison of strength with strength, almost immediately travels forward into a comparison of rights with rights, or of duty with duty. A mere fiscal question of restraint upon importation from this or that particular quarter passes into a question of colonial rights. Arrangements of convenience for the management of the pauper, or the debtor, or the criminal, or the war-captive, become the occasions of profound investigations into the rights of persons occupying those relations. Sanatory ordinances for the protection of public health,—such as quarantine, fever hospitals, draining, vaccination, &c.,—connect themselves, in the earliest stages of their discussion, with the general consideration of the duties which the state owes to its subjects. If education is to be promoted by public counsels, every step of the inquiry applies itself to the consideration of the knowledge to be communicated, and of the limits within which any section of religious partisanship can be safely authorised to interfere. If coercion, beyond the warrant of the ordinary law, is to be applied as a remedy for local outrages, a tumult of opinions arises instantly as to the original causes of the evil, as to the sufficiency of the subsisting laws to meet its pressure, and as to the modes of connecting enlarged powers in the magistrate with the *minimum* of offence to the general rights of the subject.

Everywhere, in short, some question of duty and responsibility arises to face us in any the smallest public interest that *can* become the subject of public opinion. Questions, in fact, that fall short of this dignity,—questions that concern public convenience only, and do not wear any moral aspect, such as the bullion question,—never *do* become

subjects of public opinion. It cannot be said in which direction lies the bias of public opinion. In the very possibility of interesting the public judgment is involved the certainty of wearing some relation to moral principles. Hence the ardour of our public disputes,—for no man views without concern a great moral principle darkened by party motives, or placed in risk by accident; hence the dignity and benefit of our public disputes; hence, also, their ultimate relation to the Christian faith. We do not, indeed, in these days, as did our homely ancestors in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, cite texts of Scripture as themes for senatorial commentary or *exegesis*; but the virtual reference to Scriptural principles is now a thousand times more frequent. The great principles of Christian morality are now so interwoven with our habits of thinking that we appeal to them no longer *as* Scriptural authorities, but as the natural suggestions of a sound judgment. For instance, in the case of any wrong offered to the Hindoo races, now so entirely dependent upon our wisdom and justice, we British[1] immediately, by our solemnity of investigation, testify our sense of the deep responsibility to India with which our Indian supremacy has invested us. We make no mention of the Christian oracles. Yet where, then, have we learned this doctrine of far-stretching responsibility? In all Pagan systems of morality there is the vaguest and slightest appreciation of such relations as connect us with our colonies. But from the profound philosophy of Scripture we have learned that no relations whatever, not even those of property, can connect us with even a brute animal but that we contract concurrent obligations of justice and mercy.

[1] "*We British*":—It may be thought that in the prosecution of Verres the people of Rome acknowledged something of the same high responsibility. Not at all. The case came before Rome, not as a case of injury to a colonial child, whom the general mother was bound to protect and avenge; but as an appeal, by way of special petition, from Sicilian clients. It was no grand political movement, but simply judicial. Verres was an ill-used man, and the victim of private intrigues. Or, whatever *he* might be, Rome certainly sate upon the cause not in any character of maternal protectress taking up voluntarily the support of the weak, but as a sheriff assessing damages in a case forced upon his court by the plaintiff.

In this age, then, public interests move and prosper through conflicts of opinion. Secondly, as I have endeavoured to show, public opinion cannot settle powerfully upon any question that is *not* essentially a moral question. And, thirdly, in all moral questions, we, of Christian nations, are compelled, by habit and training, as well as other causes, to derive our first principles, consciously or not, from the Scriptures. It is therefore through the *doctrinality* of our religion that we derive arms for all moral questions; and it is as moral questions that any political disputes much affect us. The daily conduct, therefore, of all great political interests throws us unconsciously upon the first principles which we all derive from Christianity. And, in this respect, we are more advantageously placed, by a very noticeable distinction, than the professors of the two other doctrinal religions. The Koran, having pirated many sentiments from the Jewish and the Christian systems, could not but offer some rudiments of moral judgment; yet, because so much of these rudiments is stolen, the whole is incoherent, and does not form a *system* of ethics. In Judaism, again, the special and insulated situation of the Jews has unavoidably impressed an exclusive bias upon its principles. In both codes the rules are often of restricted and narrow application. But in the Christian Scriptures the rules are so comprehensive and large as uniformly to furnish the major proposition of a syllogism; whilst the particular act under discussion, wearing perhaps some modern name, naturally is not directly mentioned, and to bring this, in the minor proposition, under the principle contained in the major is a task left to the judgment of the inquirer in each particular case. Something is here intrusted to individual understanding; whereas in the Koran, from the circumstantiality of the rule, you are obliged mechanically to rest in the letter of the precept. The Christian Scriptures, therefore, not only teach, but train the mind to habits of *self*-teaching in all moral questions, by enforcing more or less of activity in applying the rule,—that is, in subsuming the given case proposed under the Scriptural principle.

Hence it is certain, and has been repeatedly illustrated, that, whilst the Christian faith, in collision with others,

would inevitably rouse to the most active fermentation of minds, the Mohammedan (as also doctrinal, but unsystematical) would have the same effect in kind, but far feebler in degree, and an idolatrous religion would have no such effect at all. Agreeably to this scale, some years ago, a sect of reforming or fanatical Mohammedans in Bengal[1] commenced a persecution of the surrounding Hindoos. At length, a reaction took place on the part of the idolaters; but in what temper? Bitter enough, and so far alarming as to call down a government interference with troops and artillery, but yet with no signs of *religious* retaliation. That was a principle of movement which the Hindoos could not understand: their retaliation was simply to the personal violence they had suffered. Such is the inertia of a mere *cultus*. And, in the other extreme, if we Christians, in our intercourse with both Hindoos and Mohammedans, were not sternly reined up by the vigilance of the local governments, no long time would pass before all India would be incurably convulsed by disorganizing feuds.

[1] At Baraset, if I remember rightly.

PROTESTANTISM [1]

THE work whose substance and theme are thus briefly abstracted is at this moment (1847) making a noise in the world. It is ascribed by report to two bishops—not jointly, but alternatively in the sense that, if one did *not* write the

[1] Appeared first in *Tait's Magazine* for November and December 1847 and February 1848 : reprinted by De Quincey in 1858 in vol. viii of his Collected Writings, with this explanation:—"This little "paper, founded on *A Vindication of Protestant Principles by Phile-* "*leutherus Anglicanus*, might perhaps sufficiently justify itself by the "importance of the principles discussed if it replied to a mere imagin- "ary antagonist. But this was not so. The *Vindication* was a real "book, and, as a startling phenomenon, made a sudden and deep "impression."—Besides this footnote to the paper in the body of the volume, there was a similar notice in the author's preface to the volume, as follows :—"The suggesting-ground of the paper entitled "*Protestantism* was really a pamphlet, or rather book, judging by its "careful and erudite composition ; and this work, if now forgotten "naturally after a lapse of a dozen years, was really ascribed to two "separate bishops of distinguished literary pretension. I know not "who it really was that I commented upon, but certainly he was no "ghostly creation of mine : he was *incarnate* at that time, and I hope "still continues to be so."—The author of the startling publication of 1847, it has now been ascertained, was John W. Donaldson, D.D. (1811-1861), then head-master of the Grammar School of Bury St. Edmunds, and remembered now for his *New Cratylus*, *Varronianus*, and other important works of classical scholarship. It is to the credit of De Quincey's shrewdness that, while concurring in the general guess that the unknown author might be an English bishop, he detected certain peculiarities in the phraseology of the book pointing rather to the possibility of a Scottish original. Now, Dr. Donaldson, though born in London, was of Scottish extraction, and inherited Scottish connexions.—M.

book, the other *did*. The Bishops of Oxford and St. David's, Wilberforce and Thirlwall, are the two pointed at by the popular finger; and, in some quarters, a third is suggested, viz. Stanley, Bishop of Norwich. The betting, however, is altogether in favour of Oxford. So runs the current of *public* gossip. But the public is a bad guesser, "stiff in opinion," and almost "always in the wrong." Now let *me* guess. When I had read for ten minutes, I offered a bet of seven to one (no takers) that the author's name began with H. Not out of any love for that amphibious letter: on the contrary, being myself what Professor Wilson calls a *hedonist*, or philosophical voluptuary, murmuring, with good reason, if a rose leaf lies doubled below me, naturally I murmur at a letter that puts one to the expense of an aspiration, forcing into the lungs an extra charge of raw air on frosty mornings. But truth is truth, in spite of frosty air. And yet, upon further reading, doubts gathered upon my mind. The H. that I mean is an Englishman: now it happens that here and there a word, or some peculiarity in using a word, indicates, in this author, a Scotchman; for instance, the expletive "just," which so much infests Scottish phraseology, written or spoken, at page 1; elsewhere the word "*shortcomings*,"—which, being horribly tabernacular, and such as no gentleman could allow himself to touch it without gloves, it is to be wished that our Scottish brethren would resign, together with "*backslidings*," to the use of field-preachers. But worse, by a great deal, and not even intelligible in England, is the word *thereafter*, used as an adverb of time,—*i.e.* as the correlative of *hereafter*. *Thereafter*, in pure vernacular English, bears a totally different sense. In "Paradise Lost," for instance, having heard the character of a particular angel, you are told that he spoke *thereafter*,—*i.e.* spoke agreeably to that character. "How a score of sheep, Master Shallow?" The answer is, "*Thereafter* as they be." Again, "Thereafter as a man sows shall he reap"—*i.e.* conformably or answerably to what he sows. The objections are overwhelming to the Scottish use of the word: first, because already in Scotland it is a barbarism transplanted from the filthy vocabulary of attorneys, locally called *writers*; secondly, because in England it is not even intelligible, and, what is worse still,

sure to be *mis*-intelligible. And yet, after all, these exotic forms may be a mere blind. The writer is, perhaps, purposely leading us astray with his "*thereafters*" and his horrid "*shortcomings*." Or, because London newspapers and Acts of Parliament are beginning to be more and more polluted with these barbarisms, he may even have caught them unconsciously. And, on looking again at one case of "*thereafter*"—viz. at page 79—it seems impossible to determine whether he uses it in the classical English sense, or in the sense of leguleian barbarism.

This question of authorship, meantime, may seem to the reader of little moment. Far from it! The weightier part of the interest depends upon that very point. If the author really *is* a bishop, or supposing the public rumour so far correct as that he is a man of distinction in the English Church, then, and by that simple fact, this book, or this pamphlet, interesting at any rate for itself, becomes separately interesting through its authorship, so as to be the most remarkable phenomenon of the day. And why? Because the most remarkable expression of a movement accomplished and proceeding in a quarter that, if any on this earth, might be thought sacred from change. Oh, fearful are the motions of time, when suddenly lighted up to a retrospect of thirty years! Pathetic are the ruins of time in its slowest advance! Solemn are the prospects, so new and so incredible, which time unfolds at every turn of its wheeling flight! Is it come to this? Could any man, one generation back, have anticipated that an English dignitary, and speaking on a very delicate religious question, should deliberately appeal to a writer confessedly infidel, and proud of being an infidel, as a "triumphant" settler of Christian scruples? But, if the infidel is right—a point which I do not here discuss; but if the infidel is a man of genius—a point which I do not deny; was it not open to cite him, even though the citer were a bishop? Why, yes—uneasily one answers, *yes*; but still the case records a strange alteration; and still one could have wished to hear such a doctrine, which ascribes human infirmity (nay, human criminality) to *every* book of the Bible, uttered by anybody rather than by a father of the Church, and guaranteed by anybody rather than by an infidel in

triumph. A boy may fire his pistol unnoticed; but a sentinel, mounting guard in the dark, must remember the trepidation that will follow any shot from *him*, and the certainty that it will cause all the stations within hearing to get under arms immediately. Yet why, if this bold opinion *does* come from a prelate, he being but one man, should it carry so alarming a sound? Is the whole bench of bishops bound and compromised by the audacity of any one amongst its members? Certainly not. But yet such an act, though it should be that of a rash precursor, marks the universal change of position; there is ever some sympathy between the van and the rear of the same body at the same time; and the boldest could not have dared to go ahead so rashly, if the rearmost was not known to be pressing forward to his support far more closely than thirty years ago he could have done. There have been, it is true, heterodox professors of divinity and freethinking bishops before now. England can show a considerable list of such people; even Rome has a smaller list. Rome, that weeds all libraries, and is continually burning books, in effigy, by means of her vast *Index Expurgatorius*,[1] —which index continually she is enlarging by successive supplements,—needs also an *Index Expurgatorius* for the catalogue of her prelates. Weeds there are in the very flower-garden and conservatory of the Church. Fathers of the Church are no more to be relied on as safe authorities than we rascally lay authors, that notoriously will say anything. And it is a striking proof of this amongst our English bishops that the very man who, in the last generation, most of all won the public esteem as the champion of the Bible against Tom

[1] "*Index Expurgatorius*":—A question of some interest arises upon the casuistical construction of this index. We that are not by name included — may we consider ourselves indirectly licensed? Silence, I should hope, gives consent. And, if it wasn't that the present Pope, being a horrid Radical, would be sure to blackball *me* as an honest Tory, I would send him a copy of my *Opera Omnia*, requesting his Holiness to say, by return of post, whether I ranked amongst the chaff winnowed by St. Peter's flail, or had his gracious permission to hold myself amongst the pure wheat gathered into the Vatican garner. [The reigning Pope at the date of this note was Pius IX. He had been elected in 1846, with a reputation for political liberalism very extraordinary at the time, but which faded away in a year or two.—M.]

Paine was privately known amongst us connoisseurs in heresy (that are always prying into ugly secrets) to be the least orthodox thinker, one or other, amongst the whole brigade of eighteen thousand contemporary clerks who had subscribed the Thirty-nine Articles. Saving your presence, reader, his lordship was no better than a bigoted Socinian,—which in a petty diocese that he never visited, and amongst South Welshmen, that are all incorrigible Methodists, mattered little, but would have been awkward had he come to be Archbishop of York ; and that he did *not* turned upon the accident of a few weeks too soon, by which the Fates cut short the thread of the Whig Ministry in 1807.[1] Certainly for a Romish or an English bishop to be a Socinian is *un peu fort*. But I contend that it is quite possible to be far less heretical, and yet dangerously bold ; yes, upon the free and spacious latitudes purposely left open by the English Thirty-nine Articles (ay, or by *any* Protestant Confession) to plant novelties not less startling to religious ears than Socinianism itself. Besides (which adds to the shock), the dignitary now before us, whether bishop or no bishop, does not write in the tone of a conscious heretic, or, like Archdeacon Blackburne[2] of old, in a spirit of hostility to his own fellow-churchmen ; but, on the contrary, in the tone of one relying upon support from his clerical brethren, he stands forward as expositor and champion of views now prevailing amongst the *elite* of the English Church. So construed, the book is, indeed, a most extraordinary one,

[1] The bishop pointed to was Richard Watson, Bishop of Llandaff, whose *Apology for the Bible* against Thomas Paine appeared first in 1796. For De Quincey's fuller account of Bishop Watson from personal acquaintance at the Lakes, see *ante*, Vol. II, pp. 194-203.—M.

[2] "*Archdeacon Blackburne*" :—He was the author of "The Confessional," which at one time made a memorable ferment amongst all those who loved as sons, or who hated as Nonconformists, the English Establishment. This was his most popular work ; but he wrote many others in the same temper, that fill six or seven octavos. I fear that it may be a duty to read him ; and, if it is, then I think of his seven octavos with holy horror. [The collected works of Francis Blackburne, Archdeacon of Cleveland (born 1705, died 1787), were published in seven volumes in 1804. The best known of them, and that to which De Quincey particularly refers, was first published in 1770, with the title *The Confessional : or a Full and Free Inquiry into the Right, Utility, Edification, and Success of Establishing Systematic Confessions of Faith and Doctrine in Protestant Churches.*—M.]

and exposes a record that almost shocks one of the strides made in religious speculation. Opinions change slowly and stealthily. The steps of the changes are generally continuous; but sometimes it happens that the notice of such steps, the publication of such changes, is *not* continuous, that it comes upon us *per saltum*, and consequently with the stunning effect of an apparent treachery. Every thoughtful man raises his hands with an involuntary gesture of awe at the revolutions of so revolutionary an age when thus summoned to the spectacle of an English prelate serving a piece of artillery against what once were fancied to be main outworks of religion, and at a station sometimes considerably in advance of any station ever occupied by Voltaire.[1]

It is this audacity of speculation, I apprehend, this *étalage* of bold results, rather than any success in their development, which has fixed the public attention. Development, indeed, applied to philosophic problems, or research applied to questions of erudition, was hardly possible within so small a compass as one hundred and seventeen pages; for *that* is the extent of the work, except as regards the notes, which amount to seventy-four pages more. Such brevity, on such a subject, is unseasonable, and almost culpable. On such a subject as the Philosophy of Protestantism "*satius erat silere quam parcius dicere.*" Better were absolute silence, more respectful as regards the theme, less tantalising as regards the reader, than a style of discussion so fragmentary and so rapid.

But, before we go farther, what are we to call this bold man? One must have some name for a man that one is reviewing; and, as he comes abroad *incognito*, it is difficult to say what name *could* have any propriety. Let me consider. There are three bishops in the field, Mr. H., and the

[1] "*Voltaire*":—Let not the reader misunderstand me. I do not mean that the clerical writer now before us (bishop or not bishop) is more hostile to religion than Voltaire, or is hostile at all. On the contrary, he is, perhaps, profoundly religious, and he writes with neither levity nor insincerity. But this conscientious spirit, and this piety, do but the more call into relief the audacity of his freethinking—do but the more forcibly illustrate the prodigious changes in the spirit of religious philosophy wrought by time and by the contagion from secular revolutions.

Scotchman. That makes five. But every one of these, you say, is represented equally by the name in the title—"Phileleutherus Anglicanus." True, but *that's* as long as a team of horses. If it had but *Esquire* at the end, it would measure against a Latin Hexameter verse. I'm afraid that we must come at last to *Phil.* I've been seeking to avoid it, for it's painful to say "Jack" or "Dick" either *to* or *of* an ecclesiastical great gun. But, if such big-wigs *will* come abroad in disguise, and with names as long as Fielding's Hononchrononthononthologus, they must submit to be hustled by pickpockets and critics, and to have *their* names docked, as well as profane authors.

Phil., then, be it—that's settled. Now, let us inquire what it is that *Phil.* has been saying to cause such a sensation amongst the Gnostics. And, to begin at the beginning, what is *Phil.'s* capital object? *Phil.* shall state it himself. These are his opening words:—"In the following "pages we propose to vindicate the fundamental and inherent "*principles* of Protestantism." Good; but what *are* the fundamental principles of Protestantism? "They are," says *Phil.*, "the sole sufficiency of Scripture,[1] the right of private "judgment in its interpretation, and the authority of indi- "vidual conscience in matters of religion." Errors of logic show themselves more often in a man's terminology, and his antitheses, and his subdivisions, than anywhere else. *Phil.* goes on to make this distinction, which brings out his imperfect conception. "We," says he (and, by the way, if *Phil.* is *we*, then it must be my duty to call him *they*)—"we do "not propose to defend the varieties of *doctrine* held by the

[1] "*Sole sufficiency of Scripture*":—This is much too elliptical a way of expressing the Protestant meaning. Sufficiency for *what?* "Sufficiency for salvation" is the phrase of many, and I think elsewhere of *Phil.* But *that* is objectionable on more grounds than one; it is redundant, and it is aberrant from the true point contemplated. *Sufficiency for itself without alien helps*, is the thing contemplated. The Greek *autarkeia* (αὐταρκεια), self-sufficiency,—or, because that phrase, in English, has received a deflection towards a bad meaning, the word *self-sufficingness*—might answer: sufficiency for the exposition of its own most secret meaning out of fountains within itself; needing, therefore, neither the supplementary aids of tradition, on the one hand, nor the complementary aids on the other (in the event of unprovided cases, or of dilemmas arising) from the infallibility of a *living* expounder.

"different communities of Protestants." Why, no; that would be a sad task for the most skilful of funambulists or theological tumblers, seeing that many of these varieties stand related to each other as categorical affirmative and categorical negative: it's heavy work to make *yes* and *no* pull together in the same proposition. But this, fortunately for himself, *Phil.* declines. You are to understand that he will not undertake the defence of Protestantism in its *doctrines*, but only in its *principles*. That won't do; that antithesis is as hollow as a drum; and, if the objection were verbal only, I would not make it. But the contradistinction fails to convey the real meaning. It is not that he has falsely expressed his meaning, but that he has falsely developed that meaning to his own consciousness. Not the word only is wrong; but the wrong word is put forward for the sake of hiding the imperfect idea. What he calls *principles* might almost as well be called *doctrines*, and what he calls *doctrines* as well be called *principles*. Out of these terms, apart from the rectifications suggested by the context, no man could collect his drift; which is simply this:—Protestantism, we must recollect, is not an absolute and self-dependent idea; it stands in relation to something antecedent, against which it protests—viz. Papal Rome. And under what phasis does it protest against Rome? Not against the Christianity of Rome, because every Protestant Church, though disapproving a great deal of *that*, disapproves also a great deal in its own sister churches of the protesting household, and because every Protestant Church holds a great deal of Christian truth in common with Rome. But what furnishes the matter of protest is the *deduction of the title* upon which Rome plants the right to be a Church at all. This deduction is so managed by Rome as to make herself not merely a true Church (which many Protestants grant), but the exclusive Church. Now, what *Phil.* in effect undertakes to defend is not principles by preference to doctrines (for they are pretty nearly the same thing), but the question of title to teach at all, in preference to the question of what is the thing taught. *There* is the distinction, as I apprehend it. All these terms—"principle," "doctrine," "system," "theory, "hypothesis"—are used nearly always most licentiously, and as arbitrarily as a Newmarket jockey

selects the colours for his riding-dress. It is true that one shadow of justification offers itself for *Phil.'s* distinction. All principles are doctrines, but all doctrines are not principles. Which, then, in particular? Why, those properly are principles which contain the *principia*, the beginnings, or starting-points of evolution, out of which any system of truth is developed. Now, it may seem that the very starting-point of our Protestant pretensions is, first of all, to argue our *title* or right to be a Church *sui juris*; apparently we must begin by making good our *locus standi*, before we can be heard upon our doctrines. And, upon this mode of approach, the pleadings about the *title*, or right to teach at all, taking precedency of the pleadings about the particular things taught, would be the *principia*, or beginnings of the whole process, and so far would be entitled by preference to the name of *principles*. But such a mode of approach is merely an accident, and contingent upon our being engaged in a polemical discussion of Protestantism in relation to Popery. *That*, however, is a pure matter of choice. Protestantism may be discussed, as though Rome were not, in relation to its own absolute merits; and this treatment is the logical treatment, applying itself to what is permanent in the *nature* of the object; whereas the other treatment applies itself to what is casual and vanishing in the *history* (or the origin) of Protestantism. For, after all, it would be no great triumph to Protestantism that she should prove her birthright to revolve as a *primary* planet in the Christian system; that she had the same original right as Rome to wheel about the great central orb, undegraded to the rank of satellite or secondary projection—if, in the meantime, telescopes should reveal the fact that she was pretty nearly a sandy desert. *What* a Church teaches is true or not true, without reference to her independent right of teaching; and eventually, when the irritations of earthly feuds and political schisms shall be tranquillised by time, the philosophy of this whole question will take an inverse order. The credentials of a Church will not be put in first and the quality of her doctrine discussed as a secondary question. On the contrary, her credentials will be sought *in* her doctrine. The protesting church will say,—I have the *right* to stand separate, because I *do* stand;

and from my holy teaching I deduce my title to teach. *Jus est ibi summum docendi ubi est fons purissimus doctrinæ.* That inversion of the Protestant plea with Rome is even now valid with many ; and, when it becomes universally current, then the *principles*, or great beginnings of the controversy, will be transplanted from the centre, where *Phil.* places them, to that very *locus* which he neglects. One Church may say—My doctrine must be holy, because it is admitted that I have the authentic commission from Heaven to teach. But equally another Church may say—My commission to teach must be conceded, because my teaching is holy. The first deduces the purity of her doctrine from her divine commission to teach. But the second, with logic as forcible, deduces her divine commission to teach from the purity of her doctrine.

There is another expression of *Phil.'s* to which I object. He describes the doctrines held by all the separate Protestant Churches as doctrines of Protestantism. I would not delay either *Phil.* or myself for the sake of a trifle ; but an impossibility is *not* a trifle. If from orthodox Turkey [1] you pass to heretic Persia, if from the rigour of the *Sonnees* (orthodox Mussulmans) to the laxity of the *Sheeahs* (Mahometan heretics), you could not, in explaining those schisms, go on to say, "And these are the doctrines *of* Islamism" ; for they destroy each other. Both are supported by earthly powers ; but only one could be supported by a central organ of Islamism, if such there were. So of Calvinism and Arminianism : you cannot call them doctrines *of* Protestantism, as if growing out of some reconciling Protestant principles ; one of the two, though not manifested to human eyes in its falsehood, must secretly be false ; and a falsehood cannot be a doctrine of Protestantism. It is more accurate to say that the separate creeds of Turkey and Persia are *within* Mahometanism ; such,

[1] "*Orthodox Turkey*" :—At Mecca, or more probably throughout the Mussulman world, the Ottoman Sultan is regarded as the true filial champion *ed deen* (*i.e.* of the faith). He is the *right*-hand pillar ; whereas the Shah of Persia is a heterodox believer, and therefore an unsound pillar. But it illustrates powerfully the non-spirituality of this religion (though pirated chiefly from the Bible) that this great schism in Islamism does not turn upon any point of doctrine, but simply upon a most trivial question of historic fact—viz. who were *de jure* the immediate successors of Mahomet.

viz., as that neither excludes a man from the name of Mussulman; and, again, that Calvinism and Arminianism are doctrines *within* the Protestant Church—as a Church of general toleration for all religious doctrines not *demonstrably* hostile to any cardinal truth of Christianity.

Phil., then, we all understand, is not going to traverse the vast field of Protestant opinions as they are distributed through our many sects; *that* would be endless; and he illustrates the mazy character of the wilderness over which these sects are wandering,

> "Ubi passim
> Palantes error recto de tramite pellit,"

by the four cases of—1, the Calvinist; 2, the Newmanite[1]; 3, the Romanist[2]; 4, the Evangelical enthusiast—as holding

[1] As Newman was admitted into the Roman Catholic Church in 1845, the name "Newmanite" must be supposed here to designate the system of Anglican opinions, previously advocated by him, which had led him gradually to that step, and which found their exposition in 1845 in his *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*.—M.

[2] "*The Romanist*":—What, amongst Protestant sects? Ay, even so. It's *Phil.'s* mistake, not mine. He will endeavour to doctor the case, by pleading that he was speaking universally of Christian error; but the position of the clause forbids this plea. Not only in relation to what immediately precedes the passage must be supposed to contemplate *Protestant* error; but the immediate inference from it,—viz. that "the world may well be excused for doubting whether there is, after all, so much to be gained by that liberty of private judgment which is the essential characteristic of Protestantism, whether it be not, after all, merely a liberty to fall into error"—nails *Phil.* to that construction—argues too strongly that it is an oversight of indolence. *Phil.* was sleeping for the moment; which is excusable enough towards the end of a book, but hardly in section 1.—P.S.—I have since observed (which *not* to have observed is excused, perhaps, by the too complex machinery of hooks and eyes between the text and the notes, involving a double reference: first, to the section; second, to the particular clause of the section) that *Phil.* has not here committed an inadvertency, or, if he *has*, is determined to fight himself through his inadvertency, rather than break up his quaternion of cases. "In speaking of Romanism as arising from a misapplication of Protestant principles, we refer, not to those who were born, but to those who have become, members of the Church of Rome." What is the name of those people? And where do they live? I have heard of many who think (and there *are* cases in which most of us that meddle with philosophy are apt to think) occasional principles of Protestantism

systems of doctrine "no one of which is capable of recommending itself to the favourable opinion of an impartial judge." Impartial! but what Christian *can* be impartial? To be free from all bias, and to begin his review of sects in that temper, he must begin by being an infidel. Vainly a man endeavours to reserve in a state of neutrality any preconceptions that he may have formed for himself, or prepossessions that he may have inherited from "mamma"; he cannot do it any more than he can dismiss his own shadow.

available for the defence of certain Roman Catholic mysteries too indiscriminately assaulted by the Protestant zealot: but, with this exception, I am not aware of any parties professing to derive their Popish leanings *from* Protestantism; it is *in spite of* Protestantism, as seeming to *them* not strong enough, or through principles omitted by Protestantism, which therefore seems to *them* not careful enough or not impartial enough, that Protestants have lapsed to Popery. Protestants have certainly been known to become Papists, not through Popish arguments, but simply through their own Protestant books; yet never, that I heard of, through an *affirmative* process, as though any Protestant argument involved the rudiments of Popery, but by a *negative* process, as fancying the Protestant reasons, though lying in the right direction, not going far enough; or, again, though right partially, yet defective as a whole. *Phil.* therefore seems to me absolutely caught in a sort of *Furcæ Caudinæ*, unless he has a dodge in reserve to puzzle us all.—In a different point, I, that hold myself a *doctor seraphicus*, and also *inexpugnabilis* upon quillets of logic, justify *Phil.*, whilst also I blame him. He defends himself rightly for distinguishing between the Romanist and Newmanite on the one hand, between the Calvinist and the Evangelican man on the other, though perhaps a young gentleman commencing his studies on the *Organon* will fancy that here he has *Phil.* in a trap; for these distinctions, he will say, do not entirely exclude each other, as they ought to do. The class calling itself Evangelical, for instance, may also be Calvinistic; the Newmanite is not, *therefore*, anti-Romish. True, says *Phil.*; I am quite aware of it. But to be aware of an objection is not to answer it. The fact seems to be that the actual combinations of life, not conforming to the truth of abstractions, compel us to seeming breaches of logic. It would be right practically to distinguish the Radical from the Whig; and yet it might shock *Duns*, or *Lombardus*, the *magister sententiarum*, when he came to understand that partially the principles of Radicals and Whigs coincide. But, for all that, the logic which distinguishes them is right; and the apparent error must be sought in the fact that all cases (political or religious), being cases of life, are *concretes*, which never conform to the exquisite truth of abstractions. Practically, the Radical *is* opposed to the Whig, though casually the two are continually in conjunction; for, as *acting* partisans, they work *from* different centres, and, finally, *for* different results.

Every man that lives has (or has had) a *mamma*, who has made it impossible for him to be neutral in religious beliefs. And it is strange to contemplate the weakness of strong minds in fancying that they can. Calvin, whilst amiably engaged in hunting Servetus to death, and writing daily letters to his friends in which he expresses his hope that the executive power would not think of burning the poor man, since really justice would be quite satisfied by cutting his head off, meets with some correspondents who conceive (idiots that they were !) even that little amputation not absolutely indispensable. But Calvin soon settles *their* scruples. You don't perceive, he tells them, what this man has been about. When a writer attacks Popery, it's very wrong in the Papists to cut his head off; and why ? Because he has only been attacking error. But here lies the difference in this case : Servetus had been attacking the TRUTH. Do you see the distinction, my friends ? Consider it, and I am sure you will be sensible that this quite alters the case. It is shocking, it is perfectly ridiculous, that the Bishop of Rome should touch a hair of any man's head for contradicting *him* ; and why ? Because, do you see, *he* is wrong. On the other hand, it is evidently agreeable to philosophy that I, John Calvin, should shave off the hair, and, indeed, the head itself (as I heartily hope [1] will be done in this present case),

[1] The reader may imagine that, in thus abstracting Calvin's epistolary sentiments, I am a little improving them. Certainly they would bear improvement, but that is not my business. What the reader sees here is but the result of bringing scattered passages into closer juxtaposition, whilst, as to the strongest (viz. the most sanguinary) sentiments here ascribed to him, it will be a sufficient evidence of my fidelity to the literal truth if I cite three separate sentences. Writing to Farel, he says, "*Spero* capitale saltem fore judicium." Sentence of the court, he *hopes*, will, at any rate, reach the life of Servetus. Die he must, and die he shall. But why should he die a cruel death ? "Pœnæ vero atrocitatem remitti cupio." To the same purpose, when writing to Sultzer, he expresses his satisfaction in being able to assure him that a principal civic officer of Geneva was, in this case, entirely upright, and animated by the most virtuous sentiments. Indeed ! what an interesting character ! and in what way, now, might this good man show this beautiful tenderness of conscience ? Why, by a fixed resolve that Servetus should not in any case escape the catastrophe which I, John Calvin, am longing for ("ut saltem exitum *quem optamus* non fugiat"). Finally, writing to the same Sultzer, he

of any man presumptuous enough to contradict *me*; but then, why? For a reason that makes all the difference in the world, and which, one would think, idiocy itself could not overlook—viz. that I, John Calvin, am right—right through three degrees of comparison—right, righter or more right, rightest or most right.

The self-sufficingness of the Bible, and the right of private judgment—here, then, are the two great characters in which Protestantism commences; these are the bulwarks behind which it intrenches itself against Rome. And it is remarkable that these two great preliminary laws, which soon diverge into fields so different, at the first are virtually one and the same law. The refusal of a Delphic oracle at Rome alien to the Bible, extrinsic to the Bible, and claiming the sole interpretation of the Bible,—the refusal of an oracle that reduced the Bible to a hollow mask, underneath which fraudulently introducing itself any earthly voice could mimic a heavenly voice,—was in effect to refuse the coercion of this false oracle over each man's conscientious judgment; to make the Bible independent of the Pope was to make man independent of *all* religious controllers. The *self-sufficingness of Scripture*, its independency of any external interpreter, passed in one moment into the other great Protestant doctrine of *Toleration*. It was but the same triumphal monument under a new angle of sight, the golden and silver faces of the same heraldic shield. The very same act which denies the right of interpretation to a mysterious Papal phœnix, renewed from generation to generation, having the antiquity and the incomprehensible omniscience of the Simorg,[1] that ancient bird in Southey, transferred this right

remarks that, when we see the Papists such avenging champions of their own superstitious fables as not to falter in shedding innocent blood, "pudeat Christianos magistratus [as if the Roman Catholic magistrates were not Christians] in tuenda *certa* veritate nihil prorsus habere animi,"—"Christian magistrates ought to be ashamed of themselves for manifesting no energy at all in the vindication of truth undeniable." Yet, really, since these magistrates had at that time the full design, which design not many days after they executed, of maintaining truth by fire and faggot, one does not see the call upon them for blushes so very deep as Calvin requires. Hands so crimson with blood might compensate the absence of crimson cheeks.

[1] "*The Simorg*":—If the reader has not made the acquaintance

of mere necessity to the individuals of the whole human race. For where else could it have been lodged? Any attempt in any other direction was but to restore the Papal power in a new impersonation. Every man, therefore, suddenly obtained the right of interpreting the Bible for himself. But the word "*right*" obtained a new sense. Every man has the right, protected by the Queen's Bench, of publishing an unlimited number of metaphysical systems; and, under favour of the same indulgent Bench, we all enjoy the unlimited right of laughing at him. But not the whole race of man has a right to *coerce*, in the exercise of his intellectual rights, the humblest of individuals. The rights of men are thus unspeakably elevated; for, being now freed from all anxiety, being sacred as merely *legal* rights, they suddenly rise into a new mode of responsibility as *intellectual* rights. As a Protestant, every mature man, the very humblest and poorest, has the same dignified right over his own opinions and profession of faith that he has over his own hearth. But his hearth can rarely be abused; whereas his religious system, being a vast kingdom, opening by immeasurable gates upon worlds of light and worlds of darkness, now brings him within a new amenability—called upon to answer new impeachments, and to seek for new assistances. Formerly another was answerable for his belief; if that were wrong, it was no fault of his. Now he has new rights, but these have burdened him with new obligations. Now he is crowned with the glory and the palms of an intellectual creature, but he is alarmed by the certainty of corresponding struggles. Protestantism it is that has created him into this child and heir of liberty; Protestantism it is that has invested him with these unbounded privileges of private judgment, giving him in one moment the sublime powers of a Pope within one solitary conscience; but Protestantism it is that has introduced him to the most dreadful of responsibilities.

I repeat that the twin maxims, the columns of Hercules through which Protestantism entered the great sea of human activities, were originally but two aspects of one law: to

of this mysterious bird, eldest of created things, it is time he should. The Simorg would help him out of all his troubles, if the reader could find him at home. Let him consult Southey's "Thalaba."

deny the Papal control over men's conscience, being to affirm man's self-control, was, therefore, to affirm man's universal right to toleration, which again implied a corresponding *duty* of toleration. Under this bi-fronted law, generated by Protestantism, but in its turn regulating Protestantism, *Phil.* undertakes to develop all the principles that belong to a Protestant Church. The *seasonableness* of such an investigation—its critical application to an evil now spreading like a fever through Europe—he perceives fully, and in the following terms he expresses this perception :—

"That we stand on the brink of a great theological crisis, that the problem must soon be solved how far orthodox Christianity is possible for those who are not behind their age in scholarship and science : this is a solemn fact, which may be ignored by the partisans of short-sighted bigotry, but which is felt by all, and confessed by most of those who are capable of appreciating its reality and importance. The deep sibylline vaticinations of Coleridge's philosophical mind, the practical working of Arnold's religious sentimentalism, and the open acknowledgment of many divines who are living examples of the spirit of the age, have all, in different ways, foretold the advent of a Church of the Future."

This is from the preface, p. ix, where the phrase *Church of the Future* points to the Prussian minister's (Bunsen's) *Kirche der Zukunft* ; but in the body of the work, and not far from its close (p. 114), he recurs to this crisis, and more circumstantially.

Phil. embarrasses himself and his readers in this development of Protestant principles. His own view of the task before him requires that he should separate himself from the consideration of any particular church, and lay aside all partisanship, plausible or not plausible. It is his own overture that warrants us in expecting this. And yet, before we have travelled three measured inches, he is found entangling himself with Church-of-Englandism. Let me not be misunderstood, as though, borrowing a Bentham word, I were therefore a Jerry-Benthamite : I, that may describe myself generally as *Philo-Phil.*, am not less a son of the "Reformed Anglican Church" than *Phil.* Consequently, it is not likely that, in any vindication of that Church, simply *as* such, and separately for itself, I should be the man to find grounds of exception. Loving most of what *Phil.* loves, loving *Phil.*

himself, and hating (I grieve to say) with a theological hatred whatever *Phil.* hates, why should I demur at this particular point to a course of argument that travels in the line of my own partialities? And yet I *do* demur. Having been promised a philosophic defence of the principles concerned in the great European schism of the sixteenth century, suddenly we find ourselves collapsing from that altitude of speculation into a defence of one individual church. Nobody would complain of *Phil.* if, *after* having deduced philosophically the principles upon which all Protestant separation from Rome should revolve, he had gone forward to show that in some one of the Protestant churches, more than in others, these principles had been asserted with peculiar strength, or carried through with special consistency, or associated pre-eminently with the other graces of a Christian Church, such as a ritual more impressive to the heart of man—where lies the defence for the sublime Anglican Liturgy—or a polity more symmetrical with the structure of English society—where lies the defence of Episcopacy. Once having unfolded from philosophic grounds the primary conditions of a pure scriptural Church, *Phil.* might then, without blame, have turned sharp round upon us, saying: Such being the conditions under which the great idea of a true Christian Church must be *constructed*, I now go on to show that the Church of England has conformed to those conditions more faithfully than any other. But to entangle the pure outlines of the idealising mind with the practical forms of any militant church, embarrassed (as we know all churches to have been) by pre-occupations of judgment derived from feuds too local and interests too political,—moving, also (as we know all churches to have moved) in a spirit of compromise, occasionally from mere necessities of position,—this is in the result to injure the object of the writer doubly: first, as leaving an impression of partisanship (the reader is mistrustful from the first, as against a judge that in reality is an advocate); second, without reference to the effect upon the reader, directly to *Phil.* it is injurious, by fettering the freedom of his speculations, or, if leaving their freedom undisturbed, by narrowing their compass.

And, if *Phil.*, as to the general movement of his Protestant pleadings, modulates too little in the transcendental key, sometimes he does so too much. For instance, at p. 69, sec. 35, we find him half calling upon Protestantism to account for her belief in God. How then? Is this belief special to Protestants? Are Roman Catholics, are those of the Greek, the Armenian, and other Christian Churches, atheistically given? We used to be told that there is no royal road to geometry. I don't know whether there is or not; but I am sure there is no Protestant bye-road, no Reformation short-cut, to the demonstration of Deity. It is true that *Phil.* exonerates his philosophic scholar, when throwing himself in Protestant freedom upon pure intellectual aids, from the vain labour of such an effort. He consigns him, however philosophic, to the evidence of "inevitable assumptions, upon axiomatic postulates, which the reflecting mind is compelled to accept, and which no more admit of doubt and cavil than of establishment by formal proof." I am not sure whether I understand *Phil.* in this section. Apparently he is glancing at Kant. Kant was the first person, and perhaps the last, that ever undertook formally to demonstrate the indemonstrability of God. He showed that the three great arguments for the existence of the Deity were virtually one, inasmuch as the two weaker borrowed their value and *vis apodeictica* from the more rigorous metaphysical argument. The physico-theological argument he forced to back, as it were, into the cosmological, and *that* into the ontological. After this reluctant *regressus* of the three into one, shutting up like a spy-glass, which (with the iron hand of Hercules forcing Cerberus up to daylight) the stern man of Königsberg resolutely dragged to the front of the arena, nothing remained, now that he had this pet scholastic argument driven up into a corner, but to break its neck—which he did. Kant took the conceit out of all the three arguments; but, if this is what *Phil.* alludes to, he should have added that these three, after all, were only the arguments of speculating or *theoretic* reason. To this faculty Kant peremptorily denied the power of demonstrating the Deity; but then that same *apodeixis*, which he had thus inexorably torn from reason under one

manifestation, Kant himself restored to the reason in another (the *praktische vernunft*). God he asserts to be a postulate of the human reason, as speaking through the conscience and will, not proved *ostensively*, but indirectly proved as being *wanted* indispensably, and presupposed in other necessities of our human nature. This, probably, is what *Phil.* means by his shorthand expression of "axiomatic postulates." But then it should not have been said that the case does not "admit of formal proof," since the proof is as "formal" and rigorous by this new method of Kant as by the old obsolete methods of Sam. Clarke [1] and the schoolmen.[2]

But it is not the too high or the too low—the too much or the too little—of what one might call by analogy the *transcendental* course, which I charge upon *Phil.* It is that he is too desultory—too eclectic. And the secret purpose which seems to me predominant throughout his work is, not so much the defence of Protestantism, or even of the Anglican Church, as a report of the latest novelties that have found a roosting-place in the English Church, amongst the most temperate of those churchmen who keep pace with modern philosophy; in short, it is a selection from the classical doctrines of religion, exhibited under their newest revision; or, generally, it is an attempt to show, from what is going on amongst the most moving orders in the English Church, how far it is possible that strict orthodoxy should bend, on the one side, to new impulses, derived from an advancing philosophy, and yet, on the other side, should reconcile itself, both verbally and in spirit, with ancient standards. But, if *Phil.* is eclectic, then *I* will be eclectic; if *Phil.* has a right to be desultory, then *I* have a right. *Phil.* is my leader. I can't in reason be expected to be

[1] Samuel Clarke, D.D., born 1675, died 1729, best remembered now by his *Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God* (1705), his *Verity and Certitude of Natural and Revealed Religion* (1705), and his *Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity* (1712).—M.

[2] The method of Des Cartes was altogether separate and peculiar to himself; it is a mere conjurer's juggle; and yet, what is strange, like some other audacious sophisms, it is capable of being so stated as most of all to baffle the subtle dialectician; and Kant himself, though not cheated, was never so much perplexed in his life as in the effort to make its hollowness apparent.

better than *he* is. If I'm wrong, *Phil.* ought to set me a better example. And here, before this honourable audience of the public, I charge all my errors (whatever they may be, past or coming) upon *Phil.'s* misconduct.

Having thus established my patent of vagrancy, and my licence for picking and choosing, I choose out these three articles to toy with: first, Bibliolatry; second, Development applied to the Bible and Christianity; third, Philology, as the particular resource against false philosophy relied on by *Phil.*

Bibliolatry.—We Protestants charge upon the Ponteficii, as the more learned of our fathers always called the Roman Catholics, *Mariolatry*: they pay undue honours, say we, to the Virgin. They, in return, charge upon us *Bibliolatry*, or a superstitious allegiance—an idolatrous homage—to the words, to the syllables, and to the very punctuation of the Bible. They, according to *us*, deify a woman; and we, according to *them*, deify an arrangement of printer's types. As to *their* error, we need not mind *that*: let us attend to our own. And to this extent it is evident at a glance that Bibliolatrists *must* be wrong—viz. because, as a pun vanishes on being translated into another language, even so would and must melt away, like ice in a hot-house, a large majority of those conceits which every Christian nation is apt to ground upon the verbal text of the Scriptures in its own separate vernacular version. But, once aware that much of their Bibliolatry depends upon ignorance of Hebrew and Greek, and often depends upon peculiarity of idiom or structure in modern tongues, cautious people begin to suspect the whole. Here arises a very interesting, startling, and perplexing situation for all who venerate the Bible; one which must always have existed for prying, inquisitive people, but which has been incalculably sharpened for the apprehension of these days by the extraordinary advances made and being made in Oriental and Greek philology. It is a situation of public scandal even to the deep reverencers of the Bible; but a situation of much more than scandal, of real grief, to the profound and sincere amongst religious people. On the one hand, viewing the Bible as the Word of God, and not merely so in the sense of its containing most

salutary counsels, but, in the highest sense, of its containing a revelation of the most awful secrets, they cannot for a moment listen to the pretence that the Bible has benefited by God's inspiration only as other good books may be said to have done. They are confident that in a much higher sense, and in a sense incommunicable to other books, it is inspired. Yet, on the other hand, as they will not tell lies, or countenance lies, even in what seems the service of religion, they cannot hide from themselves that the materials of this imperishable book are perishable, frail, liable to crumble, and actually *have* crumbled to some extent in various instances. There is, therefore, lying broadly before us, something like what Kant called an antinomy—a case where two laws equally binding on the mind are, or seemed to be, in collision. Such cases occur in morals—cases which are carried out of the general rule, and the jurisdiction of that rule, by peculiar deflections; and from the word *case* we derive the word *casuistry*, as a general science dealing with such anomalous cases. There is a casuistry, also, for the speculative understanding, as well as for the moral (which in Kant's terminology is the *practical*) understanding. And this question as to the inspiration of the Bible, with its apparent conflict of forces, repelling it and yet affirming it, is one of its most perplexing and most momentous problems.

My own solution of the problem would reconcile all that is urged against an inspiration with all that the internal necessity of the case would plead in behalf of an inspiration. So would *Phil.'s*. His distinction, like mine, would substantially come down to this—that the grandeur and extent of religious truth is not of a nature to be affected by verbal changes such as *can* be made by time, or accident, or without treacherous design. It is like lightning, which could not be mutilated, or truncated, or polluted. But it may be well to rehearse a little more in detail both *Phil.'s* view and my own. Let my principal go first. Make way, I desire, for my leader: let this honourable man *Phil.*, whom I, *Philo-Phil.*, now take by the right hand, and solemnly present to the public—let this Daniel who has come to judgment have precedency, as in all reason it is my duty to see that he has.

Whilst rejecting altogether any inspiration as attaching to the separate words and phrases of the Scriptures, *Phil.* insists upon such an inspiration as attaching to the spiritual truths and doctrines delivered in these Scriptures. And he places this theory in a striking light, equally for what it affirms and for what it denies, by these two arguments: first (in affirmation of the real spiritual inspiration), that a series of more than thirty writers, speaking in succession along a vast line of time, and absolutely without means of concert, yet all combine unconsciously to one end—lock like parts of a great machine into one system—conspire to the unity of a very elaborate scheme without being at all aware of what was to come after. Here, for instance, is one, living nearly one thousand six hundred years before the last in the series, who lays a foundation (in reference to man's ruin, to God's promises and plan for human restoration) which is built upon and carried forward by all, without exception, that follow. Here come a multitude that prepare each for his successor—that unconsciously integrate each other—that, finally, when reviewed, make up a total drama, of which each writer's separate share would have been utterly imperfect without corresponding parts that he could not have foreseen. At length all is finished. A profound piece of music, a vast oratorio, perfect and of elaborate unity, has resulted from a long succession of strains, each for itself fragmentary. On such a final creation resulting from such a distraction of parts it is indispensable to suppose an overruling inspiration, in order at all to account for the final result of a most elaborate harmony. Besides,—which would argue some inconceivable magic if we did not assume a providential inspiration watching over the coherencies, tendencies, and intertesselations (to use a learned word) of the whole,—it happens that, in many instances, typical things are recorded, things ceremonial that could have no meaning to the person recording, prospective words that were reported and transmitted in a spirit of confiding faith, but that could have little meaning to the reporting parties for many hundreds of years. Briefly, a great mysterious *word* is spelt as it were by the whole sum of the scriptural books —every separate book forming a letter or syllable in that

secret and that unfinished word, as it was for so many ages. This co-operation of ages not able to communicate or concert arrangements with each other is neither more nor less an argument of an overruling inspiration than if the separation of the contributing parties were by space, and not by time: as if, for example, every island at the same moment were to send its contribution, without previous concert, to a sentence or chapter of a book; in which case the result, if full of meaning, much more if full of awful and profound meaning, could not be explained rationally without the assumption of a supernatural overruling of these unconscious co-operators to a common result. So far on behalf of inspiration. Yet, on the other hand, as an argument in denial of any blind mechanic inspiration cleaving to words and syllables, *Phil.* notices this consequence as resulting from such an assumption—viz. that, if you adopt any one gospel, St. John's suppose, or any one narrative of a particular transaction, as inspired in this minute and pedantic sense, then for every other report, which, adhering to the spiritual *value* of the circumstances, and virtually the same, should differ in the least of the details, there would instantly arise a solemn degradation. All parts of Scripture, in fact, would thus be made active and operative in degrading each other.

Such is *Phil.'s* way of explaining θεοπνευστια[1] (*theopneustia*) or divine prompting, so as to reconcile the doctrine affirming a *virtual* inspiration, an inspiration as to the truths revealed, with a peremptory denial of any inspiration at all as to the mere verbal vehicle of those revelations. He is evidently as sincere in regard to the inspiration which he upholds as in regard to that which he denies. *Phil.* is

[1] "Θεοπνευστια":—I must point out to *Phil.* an oversight of his as to this word at page 45. He there describes the doctrine of *theopneustia* as being that of "plenary and verbal inspiration." But this he cannot mean, for obviously this word *theopneustia* comprehends equally the verbal inspiration which he is denouncing, and the inspiration of power or spiritual virtue which he is substituting. Neither *Phil.*, nor any one of his school, is to be understood as rejecting *theopneustia*, but as rejecting that particular mode of *theopneustia* which appeals to the eye by mouldering symbols, in favour of that other mode which appeals to the heart by incorruptible radiations of inner truth.

honest, and *Phil.* is able. Now comes *my* turn. I rise to support my leader, and shall attempt to wrench this notion of a verbal inspiration from the hands of its champions by a *reductio ad absurdum*—viz. by showing the monstrous consequences to which it leads: which form of logic *Phil.* also has employed; but mine is different, and more elaborate.

Yet, first of all, let me frankly confess to the reader that some people allege a point-blank assertion by Scripture itself of its own verbal inspiration; which assertion, if it really *had* any existence, would summarily put down all cavils of human dialectics. *That* makes it necessary to review this assertion. This famous passage of Scripture, this *locus classicus*, or prerogative text, pleaded for the *verbatim et literatim* inspiration of the Bible, is the following; and I will so exhibit its very words as that the reader, even if no Grecian, may understand the point in litigation. The passage is this: Πασα γραφη θεοπνευστος και ὠφελιμος, &c.,—taken from St. Paul (2 Tim. iii. 16). Let us construe it literally, expressing the Greek by Latin characters: *Pasa graphé*, all written lore (or every writing)—*theopneustos*, God-breathed, or God-prompted—*kai*, and (or also)—*ophelimos*, serviceable—*pros*, towards—*didaskalian*, doctrinal truth. Now this sentence, when thus rendered into English according to the rigour of the Grecian letter, wants something to complete its sense—it wants an *is*. There is a subject, as the logicians say, and there is a predicate (or something affirmed of that subject); but there is no *copula* to connect them—we miss the *is*. This omission is common in Greek, but cannot be allowed in English. The *is* must be supplied; but *where* must it be supplied? That's the very question, for there is a choice between two places; and, according to the choice, will the word *theopneustos* become part of the subject or part of the predicate: which will make a world of difference. Let us try it both ways:—

1. All writing inspired by God (*i.e.* being inspired by God, supposing it inspired, which makes *theopneustos* part of the subject) is also profitable for teaching, &c.

2. All writing is inspired by God, and profitable, &c. (which makes *theopneustos* part of the predicate).

Now, in this last way of construing the text, which is the

way adopted by our authorised version, one objection strikes everybody at a glance—viz. that St. Paul could not possibly mean to say of all writing, indiscriminately, that it was divinely inspired, this being so revoltingly opposed to the truth. It follows, therefore, that, on this way of interpolating the *is*, we must understand the Apostle to use the word *graphé*, writing, in a restricted sense, not for writing generally, but for sacred writing, or (as our English phrase runs) "*Holy Writ*"; upon which will arise three separate demurs :—First, one already stated by *Phil.*—viz. that, when *graphé* is used in this sense, it is accompanied by the article ; the phrase is either ἡ γραφη, "the writing," or else (as in St. Luke) αἱ γραφαι, "the writings," just as in English it is said "the Scripture," or "the Scriptures." Secondly, that, according to the Greek usage, this would not be the natural place for introducing the *is* Thirdly, which disarms the whole objection from this text, *howsoever* construed—that, after all, it leaves the dispute with the bibliolaters wholly untouched. We also, the anti-bibliolaters, say that all Scripture is inspired, though we may not therefore suppose the apostle to be here insisting on that doctrine. But no matter whether he is or not, in relation to this dispute. Both parties are contending for the inspiration—so far they are agreed ; the question between them arises upon quite another point—viz. as to the *mode* of that inspiration, whether incarnating its golden light in the corruptibilities of perishing syllables, or in the sanctities of indefeasible, word-transcending ideas. Now, upon that question the apostolic words, torture them how you please, say nothing at all.

There is, then, no such dogma (or, to speak *Germanicè*, no such *macht-spruch*) in behalf of verbal inspiration as has been ascribed to St. Paul ; and I pass to my own argument against it. This argument turns upon the self-confounding tendency of the common form ascribed to θεοπνευστια, or divine inspiration. When translated from its true and lofty sense of an inspiration brooding with outstretched wings over the mighty abyss of *secret* truth to the vulgar sense of an inspiration burrowing, like a rabbit or a worm, in grammatical quillets and syllables, mark how it comes down to nothing at all ; mark how a stream pretending to derive

itself from a heavenly fountain is finally lost and confounded in a morass of human perplexities.

First of all, at starting, we have the inspiration (No. 1) to the original composers of the sacred books. *That* I grant, though distinguishing as to its nature.

Next, we want another inspiration (No. 2) for the countless *translators* of the Bible. Of what use is it to a German, to a Swiss, or to a Scotsman, that, three thousand years (plus two hundred) before the Reformation, the author of the Pentateuch was kept from erring by a divine restraint over his words, if the authors of this Reformation—Luther, suppose, Zwingle, John Knox—either making translations themselves, or *relying* upon translations made by others under no such verbal restraint, have been left free to bias his mind pretty nearly as much as if the original Hebrew writer had been resigned to his own human discretion?

Thirdly, even if we adopt the inspiration No. 2, *that* will not avail us; because many *different* translators exist. Does the very earliest translation of the Law and the Prophets—viz. the Greek translation of the Septuagint—always agree verbally with the Hebrew? Or the Samaritan Pentateuch always with the Hebrew? Or do the earliest Latin versions of the entire Bible agree *verbally* with modern Latin versions? Jerome's Latin version, for instance, memorable as being that adopted by the Romish Church, and known under the name of the *Vulgate*, does it agree verbally with the Latin versions of the Bible or parts of the Bible made since the Reformation? In the English, again, if we begin with the translation, still sleeping in MS., made five centuries ago—in fact, about Chaucer's time[1]—and, passing from that to the first *printed* translation (which was, I think, Coverdale's, in 1535), if we thence travel down to our own day, so as to include all that have confined themselves to separate versions of some one book, or even of some one cardinal text,

[1] The reference is to Wycliffe's translation of the Bible from the Vulgate. Although it had been in existence in manuscript since the fourteenth century, no portion of it was accessible in print till 1731, when copies of the New Testament portion of it were edited in folio by the Rev. John Lewis of Margate, Kent. Sir Frederic Madden's edition of the whole, in 4 vols. quarto, was published by the Oxford University Press in 1850.—M.

—countless are the versions that differ ; and to the idolater of words *all* differences are important. Here, then, on that doctrine of inspiration which ascribes so much to the power of *verbal* accuracy, we shall want a third inspiration (No. 3) for the guidance of each separate Christian applying himself to the Scriptures in his mother-tongue. The man who seeks to benefit by inspiration in his choice of a translator will have to select from a multitude, since nobody contends that the truth is uniformly exhibited throughout any one version, but grants that it is dispersed in fractions through a multitude.

Fourthly, as these differences of version arise often under the *same* reading of the original text, but as, in the meantime, there are many *different* readings, here a fourth source of possible error calls for a fourth inspiration overruling us to the proper choice amongst various readings. What may be called a "textual" inspiration for *selecting* the right reading is requisite for the very same reason, neither more nor less, which supposes any verbal inspiration originally requisite for *constituting* a right reading. It matters not in which stage of the Bible's progress the error commences ; first stage and last stage are all alike in the sight of God. There was, reader, as perhaps you know, about six-score years ago, another *Phil.*, not the same as this *Phil.* now before us (who would be quite vexed if you fancied him as old as all *that* comes to—oh dear, no ! he's not near as old) : well, that earlier *Phil.* was Bentley, who wrote (under the name of *Philelcutherus Lipsiensis*) a pamphlet connected with this very subject, partly against an English infidel of that day. In that pamphlet *Phil.* the first pauses to consider and value this very objection from textual variation to the validity of Scripture ; for the infidel, (as is usual with infidels) being no great scholar, had argued as though it were impossible to urge anything whatever for the Word of God, since so vast a variety in the readings rendered it impossible to know what *was* the Word of God. Bentley, though rather rough, from having too often to deal with shallow coxcombs, was really and unaffectedly a pious man. He was shocked at this argument, and set himself seriously to consider it. Now, as all the various readings were Greek, and as Bentley happened to be

the first of Grecians, his deliberate review of this argument is entitled to great attention. There were, at that moment when Bentley spoke,[1] something more (as I recollect) than ten thousand varieties of reading in the text of the New Testament; so many had been collected in the early part of Queen Anne's reign by Wetstein, the Dutchman,[2] who was then at the head of the collators. Mill, the Englishman,[3] was at that very time making further collations. How many he added I cannot tell without consulting books—a thing which I very seldom do. But since that day, and long after Bentley and Mill were in their graves, Griesbach, the German,[4] rose to the top of the tree, by towering above them all in the accuracy of his collations. Yet, as the harvest comes before the gleanings, we may be sure that Wetstein's barn housed the very wealth of all this variety. Of this it was, then, that Bentley spoke. And what *was* it that he spoke? Why, he, the great scholar, pronounced, as with the authority of a Chancery decree, that the vast majority of various readings made no difference at all in the sense. In the *sense*, observe; but many things *might* make a difference in the sense which would still leave the doctrine undisturbed. For instance, in the passage about a camel going through the eye of a needle, it will make a difference in the sense, and a very noticeable difference, whether you read in the Greek word for *camel* the oriental animal of that name, or a ship's cable, sometimes so called; but no difference at all arises in the spiritual doctrine. Or, illustrating the case out of Shakspere, it makes no difference as to the result whether you read in Hamlet "to take arms against a *sea* of troubles," or (as has been suggested)

[1] Richard Bentley, born 1662, died 1732.—M.

[2] John Rodolph Wetstein of Basel (a German Swiss, not a Dutchman), born 1647, died 1711. It was his son, John James Wetstein, however (born 1693, died 1754), that became famous by his edition of the New Testament, with prolegomena, various readings, &c.—M.

[3] John Mill, D.D., Principal of St. Edmund's Hall, Oxford, born 1645, died 1707. His edition of the Greek New Testament, the work of thirty years, was published in 1707, a few days before his death. De Quincey's dating of him, in connexion with Bentley and Wetstein, seems a little wrong.—M.

[4] John James Griesbach, born 1745, died 1812. His critical edition of the New Testament, the great work of his life, appeared in 1807.—M.

"against a *siege* of troubles"; but it makes a difference as to the integrity of the image.[1] What has a sea to do with arms? What has a camel,[2] the quadruped, to do with a needle? A prodigious minority, therefore, there is of such various readings as slightly affect the *sense*; but this minority becomes next to nothing when we inquire for such as affect any *doctrine*. This was Bentley's opinion upon the possible disturbance offered to the Christian by various readings in the New Testament. You thought that the carelessness, or, at times, even the treachery of men, through so many centuries, must have ended in corrupting the original truth; yet, after all, you see, the light burns as brightly and steadily as ever. We, now, that are not bibliolatrists, no more believe that, from the disturbance of a few words here and there, any evangelical truth can have suffered a wound or mutilation than we believe that the burning of a wood, or even of a forest,—which happens in our vast American possessions,

[1] "*Integrity of the image*":—One of the best notes ever written by Warburton was in justification of the old reading, *sea*. It was true that against a *sea* it would be idle to take *arms*. We, that have lived since Warburton's day, have learned, by the solemn example of Mrs. Partington (which, it is to be hoped, none of us will ever forget), how useless, how vain, it is to take up a mop against the Atlantic Ocean. Can it be said that Mrs. Partington lived in vain, if she demonstrated this relation between mops and the Atlantic? Great is the mop, great is Mrs. Partington, but greater is the Atlantic. Yet, though all arms must be idle against the sea considered literally, and κατα την φαντασιαν under that image, Warburton contended justly that all images much employed *evanesce* into the ideas which they represent. A *sea* of troubles comes to mean only a *multitude* of troubles. No image of the sea is suggested; and arms, incongruous in relation to the literal sea, is not so in relation to a multitude; besides that the image *arms* itself evanesces for the same reason into *resistance*. For this one note, which I cite from boyish remembrance, I have always admired the subtlety of Warburton.

[2] Meantime, though using this case as an illustration, I believe that *camel* is, after all, the true translation: first, on account of the undoubted proverb in the East about the *elephant* going through the needle's eye,—the relation is that of *contrast* as to magnitude, and the same relation holds as to the camel and the needle's eye; secondly, because the proper word for a cable, it has been alleged, is not "camelus," but "camilus." What has an elephant to do with a needle? Why, he has this to do: the needle's eye, under its narrow function, takes charge of physical magnitude in one extreme—the elephant of the same idea in another extreme.

sometimes from natural causes (lightning, or spontaneous combustion), sometimes from an Indian's carelessness in lighting his culinary fires, sometimes from an Englishman's carelessness when throwing away into a drift of dry leaves the fuming reliques of his cigar,—can seriously have injured botany. But for *him* who conceives an inviolable sanctity to have settled upon each word and particle of the original record there *should* have been strictly required an inspiration (No. 5) to prevent the possibility of various readings arising. It is too late, however, to pray for *that*; the various readings *have* arisen; here they are, thirty thousand in amount; and what's to be done now? The only resource for the bibliolatrist is to invoke a new inspiration for helping him out of his difficulty by guiding his choice. We antibibliolaters are not so foolish as to believe that God, having once sent a deep message of truth to man, would suffer it to lie at the mercy of a careless or a wicked copyist. Treasures so vast would not be left at the mercy of accidents so vile. Very little more than two hundred years ago, a London compositor, not wicked at all, but simply drunk, in printing Deuteronomy, left out the most critical of words: the seventh commandment he exhibited thus—"Thou *shalt* commit adultery"; in which form the sheet was struck off. And, though in those days no practical mischief could arise from this singular *erratum*, which English Griesbachs will hardly enter upon the roll of various readings, yet, harmless as it was, it met with punishment. "Scandalous!" said Laud; "shocking! to tell men in the seventeenth century, as a biblical rule, that they positively must commit adultery!" The brother-compositors of this drunken biblical reviser being too honourable to betray the individual delinquent, the Star-Chamber fined the whole "chapel."[1] A black Monday *that* must have been for the self-accusing compositors. Now, the copyists of MSS. were as certain to be sometimes drunk as this compositor—famous by his act, utterly forgotten in his person—whose crime is remembered, the record of whose name has perished. We therefore hold that it never was in the power, or placed within the discretion, of any copyist, whether

[1] "Chapel" is the trade name for the whole staff of the compositors in a printing establishment.—M.

writer or printer, to injure the sacred oracles. But the bibliolatrist cannot say *that* ; because, if he does, then he is formally unsaying the very principle which is meant by bibliolatry. He therefore must require another supplementary inspiration—viz. No. 5, if I count right, to direct him in his choice of the true reading amongst so many as continually offer themselves.[1]

Fifthly, as all words cover ideas, and many a word covers a choice of ideas, and very many ideas split into a variety of modifications, we shall, even after a fifth inspiration has qualified us for selecting the true reading, still be at a loss how, with regard to this right reading, to select the right acceptation. So *there*, at that fifth stage, in rushes the total deluge of human theological controversies. One church, or one sect, insists upon one sense ; second church or second sect, "to the end of time," insists upon another. Babel is upon us ; and, to get rid of Babel, we shall need a sixth inspiration. No. 6 is clamorously called for.[2]

[1] I recollect no variation in the text of Scripture which makes any startling change, even to the amount of an eddy in its own circumjacent waters, except that famous passage about the three witnesses—"*There are three that bear record in heaven*," &c. [1 John v. 7]. This has been denounced with perfect fury as an interpolation ; and it is impossible to sum up the quart bottles of ink, black and blue, that have been shed in the dreadful skirmish. Porson even, the all-accomplished Grecian, in his letters to Archdeacon Travis, took a conspicuous part in the controversy. His wish was that men should think of him as a second Bentley tilting against Phalaris ; and he stung like a hornet. To be a Cambridge man in those days was to be a hater of all Establishments in England ; things and persons were hated alike. It may chance that on this subject Master Porson will get stung through his coffin, before he is many years deader. However, if this particular variation troubles the waters just around itself (for it would desolate a Popish village to withdraw its local saint), yet, carrying one's eye from this Epistle to the whole domains of the New Testament—yet, looking away from that defrauded village to universal Christendom, — we must exclaim, What does one miss ? Surely Christendom is not disturbed because a village suffers wrong ; the sea is not roused because an eddy in a corner is boiling ; the doctrine of the Trinity is not in danger because Mr. Porson is in a passion.

[2] One does not wish to be tedious ; or, if one *has* a gift in that way, naturally one does not wish to bestow it *all* upon a stranger, as "the reader" usually is, but to reserve part for the fireside, and the use of one's most beloved friends ; else I could torment the reader by a long

But we all know, each knows by his own experience, that No. 6 is not forthcoming; and, in the absence of *that*, what avail for *us* the others? "Man overboard!" is the cry upon deck; but what avails it for the poor drowning creature that a rope being thrown to him is thoroughly secured at one end to the ship, if the other end floats wide of his grasp? We are in prison: we descend from our prison-roof, that seems high as the clouds, by knotting together all the prison bed-clothes, and all the aids from friends outside. But all is too short: after swarming down the line, in middle air we find ourselves hanging: sixty feet of line are still wanting. To reascend—*that* is impossible: to drop boldly—alas! *that* is to die.

Meantime, what need of this eternal machinery, that eternally is breaking like ropes of sand? Or of this earth resting on an elephant, that rests on a tortoise, that, when all is done, must still consent to rest on the common atmosphere of God? These chains of inspiration are needless. The great ideas of the Bible protect themselves. The heavenly truths, by their own imperishableness, defeat the mortality of languages with which for a moment they are associated.

succession of numbers. But one more of the series—viz. No. 7, as a parting *gage d'amitié*—he must positively permit me to drop into his pocket. Supposing, then, that No. 6 were surmounted, and that, supernaturally, you knew the value to a hair's-breadth of every separate word (or, perhaps, composite phrase made up from a constellation of words), still you are lost again; for oftentimes, and especially in St. Paul, the words may be known, their sense may be known, but their *logical relation* is still doubtful. The word X and the word Y are separately clear; but has Y the dependency of a consequence upon X, or no dependency at all? Does Y modify X, or not? Is the clause which stands eleventh in the series a direct prolongation of that which stands tenth? or is the tenth wholly independent and insulated? or does it occupy the place of a parenthesis, so as to modify the ninth clause? People that have practised composition with a vigilant eye know also, by thousands of cases, how infinite is the disturbance caused in the logic of a thought by the mere position of a word as despicable as the word *even*. A mote, that is itself invisible, shall darken the august faculty of sight in a human eye; the heavens shall be hidden by a wretched atom that dares not show itself; and the station of a syllable shall cloud the judgment of a council. Nay, even an ambiguous emphasis falling to the right-hand word or the left-hand word shall confound a system.

Is the lightning dimmed or emasculated because for thousands of years it has blended with the tarnish of earth and the steams of earthly graves? Or light, which so long has travelled in the chambers of our sickly air, and searched the haunts of impurity—is that less pure than it was in the first chapter of Genesis? Or that more holy light of truth—the truth, suppose, written from his creation upon the tablets of man's heart—which truth never was imprisoned in any Hebrew or Greek, but has ranged for ever through courts and camps, deserts and cities, the original lesson of justice to man, of piety to God,—has that become tainted by intercourse with flesh? or has it become hard to decipher because the very heart, that human heart where it is inscribed, is so often blotted with falsehoods? You are aware, perhaps, reader, that in the Mediterranean Sea, off the coast of Asia Minor (and, indeed, elsewhere), through the very middle of the salt-sea billows rises up, in silvery brightness, an aspiring column of *fresh* water.[1] In the desert of the sea are found fountains—sister fountains to those of Ishmael and Isaac in the Arabian sands! Are these fountains poisoned for the poor victim of fever because they have to travel through a contagion of waters not potable? Oh no! They bound upwards like arrows, cleaving the seas above with as much projectile force as the glittering waterworks of Versailles cleave the air, and rising as sweet to the lip as ever mountain torrent that comforted the hunted fawn.

It is impossible to suppose that any truth launched by God upon the agitations of things so unsettled as languages *can* perish. The very frailty of languages is the strongest proof of this; because it is impossible to suppose that any-

[1] See Mr. Yates's "Annotations upon Fellowes's Researches in Anatolia," as *one* authority for this singular phenomenon, which has since been noticed in the Persian Gulf. This most interesting phenomenon was witnessed by the Generals Outram and Havelock, in company with most of their army, on the expedition against Persia, within the last twelve months (February 1858). In fact, if a fountain bursts out with the sudden impetus of a fiery projectile forced upwards by earthquake,—which may happen on the barren floor of the ocean as probably as in many other situations,—then, supposing the column of water above not too dense, the fountain of fresh water will naturally cleave the marine water like an arrow.

thing so great can have been committed to the fidelity of anything so treacherous. There is laughter in heaven when it is told of man that he fancies his earthly jargons, which to heavenly ears must sound like the chucklings of poultry, equal to the task of hiding or distorting any light of revelation. Had *words* possessed any authority or restraint over scriptural truth, a much worse danger would have threatened it than any malice in the human will, suborning false copyists, or surreptitiously favouring depraved copies. Even a general conspiracy of the human race for such a purpose would avail against the Bible only as a general conspiracy to commit suicide might avail against the drama of God's providence. Either conspiracy would first become dangerous when either became possible. But a real danger seems to lie in the insensible corruption going on for ever within all languages, by means of which they are eternally dying away from their own vital powers; and that is a danger which is travelling fast after all the wisdom and the wit, the eloquence and the poetry of this earth, like a mountainous wave, and will finally overtake them—their very vehicles being lost and confounded to human sensibilities. But such a wave will break harmlessly against scriptural truth; and not merely because that truth will for ever evade such a shock by its eternal transfer from language to language—from languages dying out to languages in vernal bloom—but also because, if it could *not* evade the shock, supreme truth would surmount it for a profounder reason. A danger analogous to this once existed in a different form. The languages into which the New Testament was first translated offered an apparent obstacle to the translation that seemed insurmountable. The Latin, for instance, did not present the spiritual words which such a translation demanded; and how *should* it, when the corresponding ideas had no existence amongst the Romans? Yet, if not spiritual, the language of Rome was intellectual; it was the language of a cultivated and noble race. But what shall be done if the New Testament seeks to drive a tunnel through a rude forest race, having an undeveloped language, and understanding nothing but war? Four centuries after Christ, such a case did actually occur: the Gothic Bishop Ulphilas set about translating the Gospels

for his countrymen.[1] He had no words for expressing spiritual relations or spiritual operations. The new nomenclature of moral graces, humility, resignation, the spirit of forgiveness, etc., hitherto unrecognised for virtues amongst men, having first of all been shown as blossoms and flowers, and distinguished from weeds, by Christian gardening, had to be reproduced in the Gothic language, with apparently no means whatever of effecting it. In this earliest of what we may call ancestral translations (for the Goths were of our own blood), and therefore, by many degrees, this most interesting of translations for *us*, may be seen to this day, when nearly fifteen centuries have passed, *how* the good bishop succeeded, to what extent he succeeded, and by what means. I shall take a separate opportunity for investigating that problem; but at present I will content myself with noticing a remarkable principle which applies to the case, and illustrating it by a remarkable anecdote. The principle is this—that in the grander parts of knowledge, which do not deal much with petty details, nearly all the *building* or constructive ideas (those ideas which build up the system of that particular knowledge) lie involved within each other; so that any one of the series, being awakened in the mind, is sufficient (given a multitude of minds) to lead backwards or forwards, analytically or synthetically, into many of the rest. That is the principle[2]; and the story which illustrates

[1] Ulphilas, born A.D. 318 among the Goths in Dacia, was consecrated Bishop of the Goths A.D. 348, and died A.D. 388. His translation of the New Testament from the Greek into Gothic and of part of the Old Testament from the Septuagint seems to have been done before 360. The surviving portion of it, in the famous *Codex Argenteus* or "Silver Manuscript" of the fifth or sixth century (now at Upsal), consists of fragments of the four gospels.—M.

[2] *That is the principle*":—I am afraid, on reviewing this passage, that the reader may still say, "*What* is the principle?" I will add, therefore, the shortest explanation of my meaning. If into any Pagan language you had occasion to translate the word *love*, or *purity*, or *penitence*, etc., you could not do it. The Greek language itself, perhaps the finest (all things weighed and valued) that man has employed, could not do it. The *scale* was not so pitched as to make the transfer possible. It was to execute organ music on the guitar. And hereafter I will endeavour to show how scandalous an error has been committed on this subject, not by scholars only, but by religious philosophers. The relation of Christian ethics (which word ethics, however, is itself

it is this :—A great work of Apollonius, the sublime geometer,[1] was supposed in part to have perished : seven of the eight books remained in the original Greek ; but the eighth was missing. The Greek, after much search, was not recovered ; but at length there was found (in the Bodleian, I think) an Arabic translation of it. An English mathematician (Halley), knowing not one word of Arabic, determined (without waiting for that Arabic key) to pick the lock of this MS. And he did so. Through strength of preconception, derived equally from his knowledge of the general subject and from his knowledge of this particular work in its earlier sections, using also to some extent the subtle art of the decipherer,[2]

most insufficient) to natural or universal ethics is a field yet uncultured by a rational thought. The first word of sense has yet to be spoken. There lies the difficulty ; and the principle which meets it is this, that what any one idea could never effect for itself (insulated, it must remain an unknown quality for ever) the total system of the ideas developed from its centre would effect for each separately. To know the part, you must first know the whole, or know it, at least, by some outline. The idea of *purity*, for instance, in its Christian altitude, would be utterly incomprehensible, and, besides, could not sustain itself for a moment if by any glimpse it were approached. But, when a *ruin* was unfolded that had effected the human race, and many things heretofore unobserved, *because uncombined*, were gathered into a unity of evidence to that ruin, spread through innumerable channels, the great altitude would begin dimly to reveal itself by means of the mighty depth in correspondence. One deep calleth to another. One after one, the powers lodged in the awful succession of uncoverings would react upon each other ; and thus the feeblest language would be as capable of receiving and reflecting the system of truths (because the system is an arch that supports itself) as the richest and noblest ; and for the same reason that makes geometry careless of language. The vilest jargon that ever was used by a shivering savage of Terra del Fuego is as capable of dealing with the sublime and eternal affections of space and quantity, with up and down, with more or less, with circle and radius, angle and tangent, as is the golden language of Athens.

[1] Apollonius of Perga, Greek geometer of the third century B.C. The work of his of which De Quincey goes on to speak was his Treatise on Conic Sections.—M.

[2] "*Art of the decipherer*":—An art which, in the seventeenth century, had been greatly improved by Wallis, Savilian professor of geometry at Oxford, the improver of analytic mathematics, and the great historian of Algebra. Algebra it was that suggested to him his exquisite deciphering skill, and the Parliamentary War it was that furnished him with a sufficient field of practice. The king's private

now become so powerful an instrument of analysis, he translated the whole Arabic MS. He printed it—he published it.[1] He tore the hidden truth, he extorted it, from the darkness of a perfectly unknown language—he would not suffer the Arabic to hide a treasure from man. And the book remains a monument to this day that a system of ideas, having internal coherency and interdependency, is vainly hidden under a mask of words; that it may be illuminated and restored chiefly through the reciprocal involutions of the hidden ideas themselves. The same principle applies, and *a fortiori* applies, to religious truth, as one which lies far deeper than geometry in the spirit of man, one to which the inner attestation is profounder, and to which the key-notes of Scripture (once awakened on the great organ of the human heart) are sure to call up corresponding echoes. It is not in the power of language to arrest or to defeat this mode of truth; because, when once the fundamental base is furnished by revelation, the human heart itself is able to co-operate in developing the great harmonies of the system, without aid from language, and in defiance of language,—without aid from human learning, and in defiance of human learning,—by a machinery of spiritual counterpoint.

Finally, there is another security against the suppression or distortion of any great biblical truth by false readings, which I will state in the briefest terms. The reader is aware of the boyish sport sometimes called "drake-stone": a flattish stone is thrown by a little dexterity so as to graze the surface of a river, but so also as in grazing it to dip slightly below the surface, to rise again from this dip, again to dip, again to rise, and so on, alternately dipping and

cabinet of papers, all written in cipher, and captured in the royal coach on the decisive day of Naseby (June 1645), was (I believe) deciphered by Wallis *proprio marte*; that is to say, without assistance. [Wallis was then clerk or assistant secretary to the Westminster Assembly of Divines.—M.]

[1] In this account of the feat of Edmund Halley (born 1656, died 1742) there seems to be a confusion of Halley's complete edition of the Conics of Apollonius in 1710 with his prior publication in 1706 of a separate tract of Apollonius. It was in the latter, I think, that he had performed the feat of deciphering a lost Greek original through an Arabic translation.—M.

rising *à plusieurs reprises.* In the same way, with the same effect of alternate resurrections, all scriptural truths reverberate and diffuse themselves along the pages of the Bible ; none is confined to one text, or to one mode of enunciation ; all parts of the scheme are eternally chasing each other, like the parts of a fugue ; they hide themselves in one chapter, only to restore themselves in another ; they diverge, only to recombine, and under such a vast variety of expressions that even in that way, supposing language to have powers over religious truth—which it never had, or can have—any abuse of such a power would be thoroughly neutralised. The case resembles the diffusion of vegetable seeds through the air and through the waters : draw a *cordon sanitaire* against dandelion or thistledown, and see if the armies of earth would suffice to interrupt this process of radiation, which yet is but the distribution of weeds. Suppose, for instance, the text about the *three heavenly witnesses* to have been eliminated finally as an interpolation. The first thought is—*there* goes to wreck a great doctrine ! Not at all. That text occupied but a corner of the garden. The truth, and the secret implications of the truth, have escaped at a thousand points in vast arches above our heads, rising high above the garden wall, and have sown the earth with memorials of the mystery which they envelop.

The final inference is this—that scriptural truth is endowed with a self-conservative and a self-restorative virtue ; it needs no long successions of verbal protection by inspiration ; it is self-protected : first, internally, by the complex power which belongs to the Christian *system* of involving its own integrations, in the same way as a musical chord involves its own successions of sound, and its own technical *resolutions* ; secondly, in an external and obvious way, it is protected by prodigious iteration, and secret *presupposal* in all varieties of form. Consequently, as the peril connected with language is thus effectually neutralised, the call for any verbal inspiration (which, on separate grounds, appears to be self-confounding) shows itself now, in a *second* form, to be a gratuitous and superfluous delusion, since, in effect, it is a call for protection against a danger which cannot have any existence.

There is another variety of bibliolatry, arising in a different way—not upon errors of language incident to human infirmity, but upon deliberate errors indispensable to divine purposes. The case is one which has been considered with far too little attention ; else it could never have been thought strange that Christ should comply in things indifferent with popular errors. A few words will put the reader in possession of my view. Speaking of the Bible, *Phil.* says, "We "admit that its separate parts are the work of frail and "fallible human beings. We do not seek to build upon it "systems of cosmogony, chronology, astronomy, and natural "history. We know no reason of internal or external prob- "ability which should induce us to believe that such matters "could ever have been the subjects of direct revelation." Is *that* all ? There is no reason, certainly, for expectations so unreflecting ; but is there no adamantine reason against them ? It is no business of the Bible, we are told, to teach science. Certainly not ; but that is far too little. It is an obligation resting upon the Bible, if it is to be consistent with itself, that it should *refuse* to teach science ; and, if the Bible ever *had* taught any one art, science, or process of life, capital doubts would have clouded our confidence in the authority of the book. By what caprice, it would have been asked, is a divine mission abandoned suddenly for a human mission ? By what caprice is this one science taught, and others not ? Or these two, suppose, and not all ? But an objection even deadlier would have followed. It is clear as is the purpose of daylight that the whole body of the arts and sciences composes one vast machinery for the irritation and development of the human intellect. For this end they exist. To see God, therefore, descending into the arena of science, and contending, as it were, for his own prizes, by teaching science in the Bible, would be to see him intercepting from their self-evident destination (viz. man's intellectual benefit) his own problems by solving them himself. No spectacle could more dishonour the divine idea—could more injure man under the mask of aiding him. *The Bible must not teach anything that man can teach himself.* Does a doctrine require a revelation ?—then nobody but God *can* teach it. Does it require none ?—then, in whatever case God has

qualified man to do a thing for himself, he has in that very qualification silently laid an injunction upon man to do it. But it is fancied that a divine teacher, without descending to the unworthy office of teaching science, might yet have kept his own language free from all collusion with human error. Hence, for instance, it has been argued that any language in the Bible implying the earth to be stationary and central to our system could not express a mere compliance with the popular errors of the time, but must be taken to indicate the absolute truth. And so grew the anti-Galilean fanatics.[1] Out of similar notions have risen the absurdities of a polemic Bible chronology, &c.[2] Meantime, if a man sets himself steadily to contemplate the consequences which must inevitably have followed any deviation from the customary erroneous phraseology of the people, he will see the utter impossibility that a teacher (pleading a heavenly mission) could allow himself to deviate by one hair's-breadth (and why should he wish to deviate?) from the ordinary language

[1] Viz. the fanatical opponents of Galileo.—M.

[2] The Bible cosmology stands upon another footing. *That* is not gathered from a casual expression, shaped to meet popular comprehension, but is delivered directly, formally, and elaborately, as a natural preface to the history of man and his habitation. Here, accordingly, there should be no call for accommodation to vulgar ignorance, because the ignorant populace starts with no creed or preconceptions, false or true. In fact, what most disturbs the grandeur and solemnity of the Mosaical cosmogony is the perverseness of the bibliolater. He, finding the English word *day* employed in the measurement of the intervals, takes it for granted that this must mean a *nychthemeron* of twenty-four hours; imports, therefore, into the biblical text this conceit; fights for this conceit as for a revelation from heaven; and thus disfigures the great inaugural chapter of human history with this feature of a fairy tale. But this word, which so ignorantly he presumes to be an ordinary human day, bears that meaning biblically only in common historical transactions between man and man—never once in the great prophetic writings, where God comes forward as himself the principal agent. It then means always a vast and mysterious duration —undetermined even to this hour. The *heptameron*, or seven days' work of Creation and Rest, is not a week, but a shadowy adumbration of a week, comprising perhaps millions of years. Let me ask this question: In Daniel,—whether considered as (in past ages he was) a prophet, or (as in this generation he is, even by pious men like Dr. Arnold of Rugby) simply a writer of history, and posterior to the events contemplated,—has any man been foolish enough to regard his 1260 *days* as literally such, viz. as no more than 180 weeks?

of the times. To have uttered one syllable, for instance, that implied motion in the earth would have issued into the following ruins :—First, it would have tainted the teacher with the reputation of lunacy. Secondly, it would have placed him in this inextricable dilemma : on the one hand, to answer the questions prompted by his own perplexing language would have opened upon him, as a necessity, one stage after another of scientific cross-examination, until his spiritual mission would have been forcibly swallowed up in the mission of natural philosopher ; but, on the other hand, to pause resolutely at any one stage of this public examination, and to refuse all further advance, would be, in the popular opinion, to retreat as a baffled disputant from insane paradoxes which it had not been found possible to support. One step taken in that direction was fatal, whether the great heavenly envoy retreated from his own words to leave behind the impression that he was defeated as a rash speculator, or stood to these words, and thus fatally entangled himself in the inexhaustible succession of explanations and justifications. In either event the spiritual mission was at an end : it would have perished in shouts of derision, from which there could have been no retreat, and no retrieval of character. The greatest of astronomers, rather than seem ostentatious or unseasonably learned, will stoop to the popular phrase of the sun's rising, or the sun's motion in the ecliptic. But God, for a purpose commensurate with man's eternal welfare, is by these critics supposed incapable of the same petty abstinence.[1]

A similar line of argument applies to all the compliances of Christ with the Jewish prejudices (partly imported from the Euphrates) as to demonology, witchcraft, &c. By the way, in this last word "witchcraft," and the too memorable histories connected with it, lies a perfect mine of bibliolatrous madness. As it illustrates the folly and the wickedness of the bibliolaters, let us pause upon it.

The word *witch*, these bibliolaters take it for granted,

[1] There is a repetition here of the views already expressed, *ante*, pp. 35-41, in the postscript to the paper *System of the Heavens*. But that postscript was written later than the present paper on *Protestantism*.—M.

must mean exactly what the original Hebrew means, or the Greek word chosen by the LXX; so much, and neither more nor less. That is, from total ignorance of the machinery by which language moves, they fancy that every idea and word which exists, or has existed, for any nation, ancient or modern, must have a direct interchangeable equivalent in all other languages, and that, if the dictionaries do not show it, *that* must be because the dictionaries are bad. Will these worthy people have the goodness, then, to translate *coquette* into Hebrew, and *post-office* into Greek? The fact is that all languages, and in the ratio of their development, offer ideas absolutely separate and exclusive to themselves. In the highly-cultured languages of England, France, and Germany, are words, by thousands, which are strictly untranslatable. They may be approached, but cannot be reflected as from a mirror. To take an image from the language of eclipses, the correspondence between the disk of the original word and its translated representative is, in thousands of instances, not *annular*; the centres do not coincide; the words overlap; and this arises from the varying modes in which different nations *combine* ideas. The French word shall combine the elements, *l*, *m*, *n*, *o*—the nearest English word, perhaps, *m*, *n*, *o*, *p*—by one element richer, by one element poorer. For instance, in all words applied to the *nuances* of manners, and generally to *social* differences, how prodigious is the wealth of the French language! How merely untranslatable for all Europe! In the language of high passion how bare and beggarly is the French! how incapable of rendering Shakspere! I suppose, my bibliolater, you have not yet finished your Hebrew or Arabic translation of *coquette*.[1] Well, you shall be excused from *that*, if you will only translate it into English. You cannot: you are obliged to keep the French word; and yet you take for granted, without inquiry, that in the word "witchcraft," and in the word "witch," applied to the sorceress of Endor, our authorised English Bible of King

[1] "*Coquette*":—Virgil comes near to one phasis of this idea—"Malo me Galatea petit lasciva puella, et fugit ad salices, *et se cupit ante videri.*" *Lasciva* is merely *frolicsome*: in the last line appears the coquette.

James's day must be correct. And your wicked bibliolatrous ancestors proceeded on that idea throughout Christendom to murder harmless, friendless, and oftentimes crazy old women. Meantime the witch of Endor in no respect resembled our modern domestic witch.[1] There was as much difference as between a Roman Proconsul, surrounded with eagle-bearers,

[1] "*The domestic witch*":—It is the common notion that the superstition of the *evil eye*, so widely diffused in southern lands, and in some, as Portugal, for example, not a slumbering, but a fiercely operative superstition, is unknown in England and other northern latitudes. On the contrary, to my thinking, the regular old vulgar witch of England and Scotland was but an impersonatrix of the very same superstition. Virgil expresses this mode of sorcery to the letter when his shepherd says—

"Nescio quis teneros *oculus* mihi fascinat agnos."

Precisely in that way it was that the British witch operated. She, *by her eye*, was supposed to blight the natural powers of growth and fertility. By the way, I ought to mention, as a case parallel to that of the Bible's recognising witchcraft, and of enlightened nations continuing to punish it, that St. Paul himself, in an equal degree, recognises the *evil eye*; that is, he uses the idea (though certainly not meaning to accredit such an idea) as one that briefly and energetically conveyed his meaning to those whom he was adressing. "Oh, foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you?" That is, literally, who has fascinated your senses by the evil eye? For the Greek is, *tis umas ebaskanen*? Now the word *ebaskanen* is a past tense of the verb *baskaino*, which was the technical term for the action of the evil eye. Without having written a treatise on the Æolic digamma, probably the reader is aware that F is V, and that in many languages B and V are interchangeable letters through thousands of words, as the Italian *tavola* from the Latin *tabula*, diavolo from the Greek *diabolos*, &c. Under that little process it was that the Greek *baskaino* transmigrated into the Latin *fascino*; so that St. Paul's word, in speaking to the Galatians, is the very same word as Virgil's, in speaking of the shepherd's flock as charmed by the evil eye. For, first of all, St. Paul's word *Baskaino* was undoubtedly pronounced *Vaskaino*; just as *Sebastopol* is orientally pronounced Sevastopol, and as *Sebastos*, which is the Greek equivalent for the Roman *Augustus*, was always pronounced Sevastos. By this process, the Grecian word *Baskaino* became *V*askaino, and then, with hardly any change, the Latin *Fascino* pronounced "Fas*k*ino." For the Roman "*c*" had in *all* situations the force of "*k*." Thus Cæsar was always Keysar (therefore in Greek Καισαρ); and our wicked friend Cicero was always *Kikero* (in Greek therefore Κικερων). Except for the accent on the first syllable of Fascino, the Greek and the Roman word were therefore identical to the ear, though slightly different to the eye.

and a commercial Consul's clerk, with a pen behind his ear. Apparently she was not so much a Medea as an Erichtho. (See the *Pharsalia*.) She was an *Evocatrix*, or female necromancer, evoking phantoms that stood in some unknown relation to dead men, and then, by some artifice (it has been supposed) of ventriloquism,[1] causing these phantoms to deliver oracular answers upon great political questions. Oh, that one had lived in the times of those New England wretches that desolated whole districts and terrified vast provinces by their judicial murders of witches under plea of a bibliolatrous warrant, until at last the fiery furnace, which they had heated for women and children, shot forth flames that, like those of Nebuchadnezzar's furnace, seizing upon the very agents of his cruelty, began to reach the murderous judges themselves and the denouncers! Oh, glory of retribution to see the wicked judge of New England roasted in the fire which himself had kindled—to see the cruel bibliolater, in Hamlet's words, "hoist by his own petard." [2]

Yet, after all, are there not express directions in Scripture to exterminate witches from the land? Certainly; but *that* does not argue any scriptural recognition of witchcraft as a possible offence. An imaginary crime may imply a criminal intention that is *not* imaginary; but also, which much more directly concerns the interests of a state, a criminal purpose that rests upon a pure delusion may work by means that are felonious for ends that are fatal. At this moment we English and the Spaniards have laws, and severe ones, against witchcraft—viz. in the West Indies; and indispensable it is that we should. The Obeah man from Africa can do no mischief to one of *us*. The proud and enlightened white man despises his arts; and for *him*, therefore, these arts have no existence, for they work only through strong preconceptions of their reality, and through trembling faith in their efficacy. But by that very agency they are all-

[1] I am not referring to German infidels. Very pious commentators have connected her with the *engastrimuthoi* (εγγαστριμυθοι) or ventriloquists.

[2] The reference is to the collapse of the witch-burning mania in New England about 1692, caused by the enormous multiplication of the numbers accused and the extension of the accusations into the most respectable families.—M.

sufficient for the ruin of the poor credulous negro; he is mastered by original faith, and has perished by a languishing decay thousands of times under the knowledge that *Obi* had been set for him. Justly, therefore, do our colonial courts punish the Obeah sorcerer, who (though an impostor) is not the less a murderer. Now, the Hebrew witchcraft was probably even worse; equally resting on delusions, equally nevertheless it worked for unlawful ends, and (which chiefly made it an object of divine wrath) it worked *through* idolatrous agencies. All the spells, the rites, the invocations were doubtless Pagan. The witchcraft of Judea therefore must have kept up that connexion with idolatry which it was the unceasing effort of the Hebrew polity to exterminate from the land. Consequently, the Hebrew commonwealth might, as consistently as our own in Trinidad and Jamaica, denounce and punish witchcraft without liability to the inference that it therefore recognised the pretensions of witches as real in the sense of working their bad ends by the means which they alleged. Their magic was causatively of no virtue at all; but, being believed in, like the equally false but equally operative belief of the African negro in *Obi*, it became, through and by that potent belief, the occasional means of exciting the imagination of its victims; after which the consequences were the same as if the magic had acted physically according to its pretences.[1]

[1] Does that argument not cover "the New England wretches," so unreservedly denounced in a preceding paragraph?—American Ed.—*Answer from this side of the Atlantic.*—No: surely the difference is vast between the two cases. The persons denounced and arrested in New England were entirely passive, or were so generally; they did nothing at all—they were not seeking to injure others. But the Obeah man never moved except for evil purposes, either as an agent in the service of some other man's malice, or in the service of his own rapacity as an extortioner relying upon the mystic terrors of his negro victims. Let the reader consult Bryan Edwards in his "West Indies"—a well-known book of 60 years back. Or, as I now dimly remember, in Miss Edgeworth's earliest novel of "Belinda" he will find a lively sketch embodying most of the features characterising the African form of magic; that is, the special magic of Obi (which, by the way, was popularised in London and Liverpool some 50 years back by the picturesque drama of "Obi, or Three-fingered Jack"). But, for a larger view of African magic, not limited to the Koromantyn form of *Obi*, I would refer the reader to some interesting dis-

2. *Development*, as applicable to Christianity, is a doctrine of the very days that are passing over our heads, and due to Mr. Newman, originally the ablest son of Puseyism, but now a powerful architect of religious philosophy on his own account.[1] I should have described him more briefly as a "master-builder," had my ear been able to endure a sentence ending with two consecutive trochees, and each of these trochees ending with the same syllable *er*. Ah, reader! I would the gods had made thee rhythmical, that thou mightest comprehend the thousandth part of my labours in the evasion of cacophony.[2] *Phil.* has a general dislike to the Puseyites, though he is too learned to be ignorant (as are often the Low-Church, or Evangelical, party in England) that in many of their supposed innovations the Puseyites were really only restoring what the torpor of the eighteenth century had suffered to go into disuse. They were *reforming* the Church in the sense sometimes belonging to the particle *re*,—viz. *retroforming* it, moulding it back into compliance with its original form and model. It is true that this effort for quickening the Church, and for adorning her exterior service, moved under the impulse of too undisguised a sympathy with Papal Rome. But there is no great reason to mind *that* in our age and our country. Protestant zealotry may be safely relied on in this island as a match for Popish bigotry. There will be no love lost between them—be assured of *that*—and justice will be done to both, though neither should do it to her rival; for philosophy, which has

closures (founded on personal experience) in the "African Memoranda" of Captain Beaver. The book belongs to the last generation, and must be more than 40 years old. [It was published in 1805.—M.] The author was a Post-captain in our navy; and I may mention incidentally that he was greatly admired by Coleridge and Wordsworth for the meditative and philosophic style of mind exhibited in his book. [I infer from the opening of this note that in the first American reprint of the paper on *Protestantism* the editor had inserted the comment on which De Quincey thought it worth while thus to retort in 1858. In the later American editions the whole note is copied exactly as it stands now, without return to the controverted point.—M.]

[1] Newman's *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* appeared in 1845. See footnote, *ante*, p. 254.—M.

[2] A most characteristic lesson from De Quincey on the delicacies of sentence-making!—M.

so long sought only amusement in either, is in these latter days of growing profundity applying herself steadily to the profound truths which dimly are descried lurking in both. It is these which Mr. Newman is likely to illuminate, and not the faded forms of an obsolete ceremonial that cannot now be restored effectually, were it even important that they should. Strange it is, however, that he should open his career by offering to Rome, as a mode of homage, this doctrine of development, which is the direct inversion of her own. Rome founds herself upon the idea that to *her*, by tradition and exclusive privilege, was communicated, once for all, the whole truth from the beginning. Mr. Newman lays his corner-stone in the very opposite idea of a gradual development given to Christianity by the motion of time, by experience, by expanding occasions, and by the progress of civilisation. Is Newmanism likely to prosper? Let me tell a little anecdote. Twenty years ago, roaming one day (as so often I did) with our immortal Wordsworth, I took the liberty of telling him, at a point of our walk where nobody could possibly overhear me, unless it were old Father Helvellyn, that I feared his theological principles were not quite so sound as his friends would wish. They wanted tinkering a little. But, what was worse, I did not see how they *could* be tinkered in the particular case which prompted my remark; for in that place to tinker, or in any respect to alter, was to destroy. It was a passage in the "Excursion" where the Solitary had described the baptismal rite as washing away the taint of original sin, and, in fact, working the effect which is called technically *regeneration*. In the "Excursion" this view was advanced, not as the poet's separate opinion, but as the avowed doctrine of the English Church,—to which church Wordsworth and myself yielded gladly a filial reverence.[1] But *was* this the doctrine of the

[1] The passage, which occurs in the Fifth Book of the *Excursion*, is as follows:—

> "And, when the pure
> And consecrating element hath cleansed
> The original stain, the child is thus received
> Into the second ark, Christ's Church, with trust
> That he, from wrath redeemed, therein shall float
> Over the billows of this troublesome world
> To the fair land of everlasting life."—M.

English Church? *That* I doubted; and, judging by my own casual experience, I fancied that a considerable majority in the Church gave an interpretation to this sacrament differing by much from that in the "Excursion." Wordsworth was startled and disturbed at hearing it whispered even before Helvellyn, who is old enough to keep a secret, that his theology might possibly limp a little. I, on *my* part, was not sure that it *did*, but I feared so; and, as there was no chance that I should be murdered for speaking freely (though the place was lonely, and the evening getting dusky, and W. W. had a natural resemblance to Mrs. Ratcliffe's Schedoni and other assassins roaming through prose and verse), I stood to my disagreeable communication with the courage of a martyr. The question between us being one of mere fact (not what *ought* to be the doctrine, but what *was* the doctrine of our English Church at that time), there was no opening for much discussion; and, on Wordsworth's suggestion, it was agreed to refer the point to his learned brother, Dr. Christopher Wordsworth, just then meditating a visit to his native lakes.[1] That visit in a short time "came off," and then, without delay, our dispute "came on" for judgment. I had no bets upon the issue; one can't bet with Wordsworth, and I don't know that I should have ventured to back myself in a case of that nature. However, I felt a slight anxiety on the subject, which was very soon and kindly removed by Dr. Wordsworth's deciding, "sans phrase," that I, the original mover of the strife, was wrong; wrong as wrong could be; without an opening in fact to any possibility of being *more* wrong. To this decision I bowed at once, on a principle of courtesy. One ought always to presume a man right within his own *profession*, even if privately one should think him wrong. But I could not think *that* of Dr. Wordsworth. He was a D.D.; he was head of Trinity College, which has *my* entire permission to hold its head up amongst twenty colleges, as the leading one in Cambridge (provided it can also obtain St. John's per-

[1] Christopher Wordsworth, D.D., was four years younger than his brother the poet, but predeceased him by four years (born 1774, died 1846). He was Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, from 1820 to 1841.—M.

mission), "and which," says *Phil.*, "has done more than any other foundation in Europe for the enlightenment of the world, and for the overthrow of literary, philosophical, and religious superstitions." I quarrel not with this bold appreciation, remembering reverentially that Isaac Barrow, that Isaac Newton, that Richard Bentley belonged to Trinity; but I wish to understand it. The total pretensions of the college can be known only to its members; and therefore *Phil.* should have explained himself more fully. He *can* do so, for *Phil.* is certainly a Trinity man. If the police are in search of him, beyond a doubt they'll hear of him at Trinity. Suddenly it strikes me as a dream that Lord Bacon also belonged to this college. As to Dr. Wordsworth, he was, or had been, an examining chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury. Now, to suppose Lambeth in fault on such a question is equivalent to the old Roman formula of *Solem dicere falsum.* What other court of appeal was known to man? So I submitted as cheerfully as if the learned doctor, instead of kicking me out of court, had been handing me in. Yet, for all that, as I returned musing past Rydal Water, I could not help muttering to myself—Ay, now, what rebellious thought was it that I muttered? You fancy, reader, that perhaps I said, "But yet, doctor, in spite of your wig, I am in the right." No; you're quite wrong; I said nothing of the sort. What I *did* mutter was this:—"The prevailing doctrine of the Church must be what Dr. Wordsworth says—viz. that baptism *is* regeneration; he cannot be mistaken as to *that*; and I have been misled by the unfair proportion of evangelical people, bishops and others, whom accident has thrown in my way at Barley Wood (Hannah More's).[1] These, doubtless, form a minority in the Church; and yet, from the strength of their opinions, from their being a moving party, as also from their being a growing party, I prophesy this issue, that many years will not pass before this very question, now slumbering, will rouse a feud within the English Church. There is a quarrel brewing. Such feuds, long after they are ripe for explosion, sometimes slumber on, until accident kindles them into flame." That accident was furnished by the tracts of the Puseyites;

[1] See *ante*, Vol. II, p. 446.—M.

and since then, according to the word which I spoke on Rydal Water, there has been open war raging upon this very point.

At present, with even more certainty, I prophesy that mere necessity, a necessity arising out of continual collisions with sceptical philosophy, will, in a few years, carry all churches enjoying a learned priesthood into the disputes connected with this doctrine of development. *Phil.* meantime is no friend to that Newmanian doctrine ; and in sect. 31, p. 66, he thus describes it ;—"According to these "writers" [viz. the writers "who advocate the theory of development"], "the progressive and gradual development of "religious truth, which appears to *us*" [*us* in the mouth of an *anti-Newmanite* meaning the *Old*-mannians] "to have "been terminated by the final revelation of the Gospel, has "been going on ever since the foundation of the Church, is "going on still, and must continue to advance. This theory "presumes that the Bible does not contain a full and final "exposition of a complete system of religion ; that the "Church has developed from the Scriptures true doctrines "not *explicitly* contained therein" ; &c. &c.

But, without meaning to undertake a defence of Mr. Newman (whose book I am as yet too slenderly acquainted with), may I be allowed, at this point, to intercept a fallacious view of that doctrine, as though essentially it proclaimed some imperfection in Christianity. The imperfection is in us, the Christians, not in Christianity. The impression given by *Phil.* to the hasty reader is that, according to Newmanism, the Scriptures make a good beginning, to which we ourselves are continually adding—furnish a foundation, on which we ourselves build the superstructure. Not so. In the course of a day, or a year, the sun passes through a wide variety of positions, aspects, and corresponding powers, in relation to ourselves. Daily and annually he is *developed* to us—he runs a cycle of development. Yet, after all, this practical result does not argue any change or imperfection, growth or decay, in the sun. This great orb is stationary as regards his place, and unchanging as regards his power. It is the subjective change in ourselves that projects itself into this endless succession of *apparent* changes in the object. Not

otherwise on the scheme of religious development. The Christian theory and system are perfect from the beginning; in itself, Christianity changes not, neither waxing nor waning; but the motions of time and the evolutions of experience continually uncover new parts of its *unchanging* disk. The orb *grows*, so far as practically we are speaking of our own benefit or our own perceptions; but absolutely, as regards itself in its essence, the orb, eternally the same, has simply more or fewer of its digits exposed. Christianity, perfect from the beginning, had in its earlier stages a curtain over much of its disk, which Time and Social Progress are continually withdrawing. This I say not as any deliberate judgment on development, but merely as a suspending or *ad interim* idea, by way of barring too summary an interdict against the doctrine at this premature stage. *Phil.*, however, hardens his face against Newman and all his works. Him and them he defies, and would consign, perhaps secretly, to the care of a well-known (not new, but) old gentleman, if only he had any faith in that old gentleman's existence. On that point he is a fixed infidel, and quotes with applause the answer of Robinson, the once celebrated Baptist clergyman; who, being asked if he believed in the devil, replied, "Oh no: *I*, for my part, believe in God—don't *you*?" as if each belief alternately involved a negation of the other.

Phil., therefore, as we have seen, in effect condemns development. But at p. 33, when as yet he is not thinking of Mr. Newman, he says, "If knowledge is progressive, the *development* of Christian doctrine must be progressive likewise." I do not see the *must*; but I see the Newmanian cloven foot. As to the *must*, knowledge is certainly progressive; but the development of the multiplication table is not therefore progressive, nor of anything else that is finished from the beginning. My reason, however, for quoting the sentence is because here we suddenly detect *Phil.* laying down in his own person that doctrine which in Mr. Newman he had regarded as heterodox. *Phil.* is taken red-hand, as the English law expresses it, crimson with the blood of his offence; assuming, in fact, an original imperfection *quoad* the *scire*, though not *quoad* the *esse*; as to the "*exposition* of the system," though not as to the "*system*" itself of Christ-

ianity. Mr. Newman, after all, asserts (I believe) only one mode of development as applicable to Christianity. *Phil.*, having broke the ice, may now be willing to allow of two developments; whilst I, that am always for going to extremes, finding moderation to be the worst thing in this present world, should be disposed to assert three, viz.—

First, the *Philological* development. And this is a point on which I, *Philo-Phil.* (or, as for brevity you may call me, *Phil.-Phil.*), shall, without wishing to do so, vex *Phil.* It's shocking that one should vex the author of one's existence,—which *Phil.* certainly is in relation to me, when considered as *Phil.-Phil.*; for I, in my incarnation of *Phil-Phil.*, certainly could not have existed had not *Phil.* pre-existed. Still, it is past all denial that, to a certain extent, the Scriptures must benefit, like any other book, by an increasing accuracy and compass of learning in the *exegesis* applied to them. But, if all the world denied this, *Phil.*, my parent, is the man that cannot; since he it is that relies upon philological knowledge as the one resource of Christian philosophy in all circumstances of difficulty for any of its interests, positive or negative. Philology, according to *Phil.*, is the sheet-anchor of Christianity. Already it is the author of a Christianity more in harmony with philosophy; and, as regards the future, *Phil.* it is that charges Philology with the whole service of divinity. Wherever anything, being right, needs to be defended—wherever anything, being amiss, needs to be improved—on Philology it is that the burden rests. Oh, what a life he will lead this poor Philology! Philology, with *Phil.*, is the great benefactress for the past, and the sole trustee for the future. Philology is the Mrs. Partington that not only engages in single duel with the Atlantic Ocean, armed simply with her mop, but also undertakes to mop out the Atlantic from all trespass or intrusion through all time coming. Here, therefore, *Phil.* is caught in a fix; *habemus confitentem.* He denounces development when dealing with the Newmanites; he relies on it when vaunting the functions of Philology; and the only evasion for *him* would be to distinguish about the modes of development, were it not that, by insinuation, he has apparently denied all modes.

Secondly, there is the *Philosophic* development, from that

constant reaction upon the Bible which is maintained by advancing knowledge. This is a mode of development continually going on, and reversing the steps of past human follies. In every age, man has imported his own crazes into the Bible, fancied that he saw them there, and then drawn sanctions to his wickedness or absurdity from what were nothing else than reflexes projected from his own monstrous errors, or, at best, puerile conceits of adventurous ignorance. Thus did the Papists draw a plenary justification of intolerance, or even of atrocious persecution, from the evangelical "*Compel them to come in*"! The right of unlimited coercion was read in those words. People, again, that were democratically given, or had a fancy for treason, heard a trumpet of insurrection in the words "*To your tents, O Israel*"! But far beyond these in multitude were those that drew from the Bible the most extravagant claims for kings and rulers. "Rebellion was as the sin of witchcraft." This was a jewel of a text; it killed two birds with one stone—viz. simultaneously condemning all constitutional resistance, the most wise and indispensable, to the most profligate of kings, and also consecrating the filthiest of man's follies as to witchcraft. Broomsticks, as aerial horses, were proved out of it most clearly, and also the atrocity of representative government. What a little text to contain so much! Look into Algernon Sidney, or into Locke's controversy with Sir Robert Filmer's "Patriarcha,"[1] or into any books of those days on political principles, and it will be found that Scripture was so used as to form an absolute bar against human progress. All public benefits were, in the most *verbal* sense, made to be *precarious*, as depending upon prayers (*preces*—whence *precor*, and our own *precarious*) to those who had an interest in refusing them. All improvements were eleemosynary; for the initial step in all cases belonged to the crown; and, except as bounty or lordly alms from the crown, no reform was possible. "The right divine of kings to govern wrong" was in those

[1] "*Filmer's Patriarcha*":—I mention the *book* as the antagonist, and not the man, because (according to my impression) Sir Robert was dead when Locke was answering him. [Filmer's *Patriarcha* had appeared in 1680; he died in 1688; Locke's answer to him was in 1690.—M.]

days what many a man would have died for—what many a man *did* die for, and all in pure simplicity of heart—faithful to the Bible, but to the Bible of misinterpretation. They obeyed (and most sincerely, because often to their own ruin) an order which they had misread. Their sincerity, the disinterestedness of their folly, is evident; and in that degree is evident the opening for Scripture development. Nobody could better obey Scripture as *they* had understood it. Change in the obedience there could be none for the better; it demanded only that there should be a change in the interpretation, and that change would be what is meant by a *development* of Scripture. Two centuries of enormous progress in the relations between subjects and rulers have altered the whole reading. "*How readest thou?*" was the question of Christ himself; that is, in what meaning dost thou read the particular Scripture that applies to this case, so as to escape a superstitious obedience to its mere *letter*, which so often "killeth"? All the texts and all the cases remain at this hour just as they were for our ancestors; and our reverence for these texts is as absolute as theirs; but we, applying lights of experience which *they* had not, construe these texts by a different logic. *There* now is development applied to the Bible in one of its many *strata*—that particular *stratum* which connects itself most with civil polity. Again, what a development have we made of Christian truth, how differently do we now read our Bibles in relation to the poor tenants of dungeons that once were thought, even by Christian nations, to have no rights at all!—in relation to "all prisoners and captives"[1]; and in relation, above all, to slaves! The New Testament had said nothing *directly* upon the question of slavery; nay, by the misreader it was rather supposed *indirectly* to countenance that institution. But mark—it is Mahometanism, having little faith in its own *spiritual* power of rectification, that dares not confide in its children for developing anything, but must tie them up for every contingency by the *letter* of a rule. Christianity—how differently does *she* proceed! She throws herself broadly upon the pervading spirit which burns within her morals. "Let

[1] Words from one of the beautiful petitions in the Litany of the Anglican Church.

them alone," she says of nations ; "leave them to themselves. I have put a new law into their hearts, and a new heart (a heart of flesh, where before was a stony heart) into all my children; and, if it is really there, and really cherished, that law, read by that heart, will tell them—will develop for them—what it is that they ought to do in every case as it arises, though never noticed in words, when once its consequences are comprehended." No need, therefore, for the New Testament *explicitly* to forbid slavery ; silently and *implicitly* it is forbidden in many passages of the New Testament, and it is at war with the spirit of all. Besides, the religion which trusts to formal and literal rules breaks down the very moment that a new case arises not described in the rules. Such a case is virtually unprovided for, unless it answer circumstantially to a type laid down by anticipation in some great premonitory model of legislation ; whereas every case, together with its moral relations, is expounded by a religion that speaks through a spiritual organ to an apprehension spiritually trained in man. Accordingly, we find that, when a new mode of intoxication is introduced, or a mode which, *not* being new, was unknown to Mahomet (or at least was overlooked by him), devout Mussulmans hold themselves absolved from the interdict of the Koran as to strong drink, on the ground that this interdict applied itself to the fermentations of grapes, and scandalously unaware, in its bee-like limitation of prophetic vision,[1] that such blessings

[1] "*Bee-like limitation of prophetic vision*" :—Grosser ignorance than my own in most sections of natural history is not easily imagined. I retreat in panic from a cross-examination upon such themes by a child of five years. But, nevertheless, I am possessed of various odd fragments in this field of learning, mostly achieved by my own casual observation up and down innumerable solitary roamings. I am also possessed of one solitary zoological fact, borrowed, and not self-originated (which I fear may turn out to be a falsehood), as to the optics of the bee. I picked it up about fifty years ago in a most unlikely quarter —viz. the little work of a sentimentalist and a discounting poet—namely, Samuel Rogers ; which is my chief reason for viewing it sceptically. He, in his "Pleasures of Memory," asserts that the bee, too busy for star-gazing, sees only to the extent of half-an-inch beyond his own eye. I know people with a range of vision considerably less. Will the reader permit me to present him with this little contribution to his stores of zoological science, before it has time to explode (in the

would arise in the Christian world as brown stout and Bass's medicinal ale, which the Prophet himself might have found useful as a *viaticum* on his *flight* to (or *from*, was it ?) Medina.

And so it would have been with Christians if the New Testament had contented itself with *literal* prohibitions of slavery, or of the commerce in slaves. Thousands of verbal variations would have been introduced, which no *letter* of the Scriptures could have been comprehensive enough to intercept. For instance, did servants, prædial and household, such as the Greeks termed θητες (*Thetes*), fall within the description of Δουλοι (*i.e.* slaves) ? Were serfs, again, to be accounted slaves, or the bondsmen and *ascripti glebæ* of feudal Europe ? At what point was the line to be drawn ? or what was the essential and logical distinction by which Greek and Roman slavery determined its own more or less of assimilation to the modern negro slavery in the West Indies for the three-and-a-half last centuries, and (in the Spanish South American colonies) to the Indian slavery ? Or, again, speaking more frankly and nationally, of those amongst our own brothers and sisters, both in England and Scotland, that until very lately were born and bred subterraneously, and passed their whole lives subterraneously, in mines or collieries, Scotch or English alike, and were by lawyers regarded as *ascripti metallo*, borne upon the establishment as regular working tools, indorsed upon the machinery as so many spokes in a mighty wheel, shafts and tubes in the "plant" of the concern, and liable to be pursued as fugitive slaves in the case of their coming up to daylight and walking off to some other district.[1] Would these poor Pariahs, Scotch and

event of being unsound) ? I expect no premium or *bonus* by way of *commission* on fifty years' porterage.

[1] [In Lord Cockburn's *Memorials of his Time*, published in 1856, it is explained that to as late as 1799 there were native slaves in Scotland. "Twenty-five years before,—that is in 1775,—there must have been thousands of them," he says ; "for this was then the condition of all our colliers and salters. They could not be killed, nor directly tortured ; but they belonged, like the serfs of an older time, to their respective works, with which they were sold as part of the gearing." In 1775, indeed, by an Act of George III, it was provided that all who should thenceforth *begin* to work in the Scottish coal-mines or salt-works should be free labourers, and also that the bondage

English, have stood within the benefit of any scriptural privilege, had the New Testament legislated in their behalf, and contented itself with the mere verbal *letter* of their description as Δουλοι (slaves)? Ten thousand evasions, distinctions, and subdistinctions, would have neutralised the intended relief; and a verbal refinement would for ever have defeated a merely verbal concession. Endless would be the virtual restorations to slavery under a Mahometan appeal to the *letter* of the scriptural command: endless would be the defeats of these restorations under a Christian appeal to the pervading *spirit* of God's revealed command, and under an appeal to the direct voice of God, ventriloquising through the secret whispers of man's conscience. Meantime, this sort of development (it may be objected) is not so much a light which

of the existing colliers and salters should cease after certain terms of years, according to their ages; but, as the process of emancipation involved some trouble and cost, the Act operated but partially; and it was not till June 1799 that, by another Act of George III, the last relics of the mining-servitude were formally abolished.—M.] —These hideous abuses, which worked for generations through the silent aid of dense ignorance in some quarters, and of old traditional maxims in others, under the darkness of general credulity, and riveted locally by brazen impudence in lawyers, gave way (I believe), not to any express interference of the legislature (for in these monstrous inroads upon human rights the old proverbial saying was exemplified —*Out of sight, out of mind*; and no bastille can be so much out of sight as a mine or a colliery), but simply to the instincts of truth and knowledge slowly diffusing their contagious light. Latterly, indeed, the House of Commons interfered powerfully to protect *women* from working in mines, and the poor creatures most fervently returned thanks to the House,—but, as I saw and said at the time, under the unfortunate misconception that the gracious and paternal senate would send a supplementary stream of gold and silver, in lieu of that particular stream which the honourable House had seen cause suddenly to freeze up for ever. Not that I would insinuate the reasonableness, or even the possibility, of Parliament's paying permanent wages to these poor mining women; but I *do* contend that, in the act of correcting a ruinous social evil that never could have reached its climax unless under the criminal negligence of Parliament, naturally and justly the duty fell upon that purblind Parliament of awarding to these poor mining families such an indemnification, once for all, as might lighten and facilitate the harsh transition from double pay to single pay which the new law had suddenly exacted. As a sum to be paid by a mighty nation, it was nothing at all: as a sum to be received by a few hundreds of working households, at a moment of unavoidable hardship and unforeseen change, it would have been a serious and seasonable relief,

Scripture throws out upon human life as inversely a light which human life and its eternal evolutions throw back upon Scripture. True: but then the very possibility of such developments for life, and for the deciphering intellect of man, was first of all opened by the spirit of Christianity. Christianity, for instance, brings to bear seasonably upon some opening, offered by a new phasis in the aspects of society, a new and kindling truth. This truth, caught up by some influential organ of social life, is prodigiously expanded by human experience, and subsequently, when travelling back to the Bible as an improved or illustrated text, is found to be made up in its details of many human developments. Does *that* argue any disparagement to Christianity, as though she contributed little, and man contributed

acknowledged with gratitude. Meantime, I am not able to say whether *all* the evils of female participation in mining labour, as contemplated by the wisdom of Parliament, so fearfully disturbing the system of their natural household functions, and lowering so painfully the dignity of their sexual position, have even yet been purified. Mr. Bald, a Scottish engineer, chiefly applying his science to collieries, describes a state of degradations as pressing upon the female co-operators in the system of some collieries which is likely enough to prevail at this hour (February 1858), inasmuch as the substitution of male labour would often prove too costly, besides that the special difficulty of the case would thus be aggravated. I speak of cases where the avenues of descent into the mine are too low to admit of horses, and the women, whom it is found necessary to substitute, being obliged to assume a cowering attitude, gradually subside into this unnatural posture as a fixed memorial of their brutal degradation. The spine in these poor women, slaving on behalf of their children, becomes permanently horizontal, and at right angles to their legs. In process of time they lose the power of bending back into the perpendicular attitude conferred by nature as a symbolic privilege of grandeur upon the human race; at least if we believe the Roman poet, who tells us that *She* (meaning Nature)

> "Os homini sublime dedit, cœlumque tueri
> Jussit, et erectos ad sidera tollere vultus:"

i.e., to the race of man she gave an aspiring countenance, and laid her commands upon that race to fix his gaze upon the heavens overhead, and to lift up all faces erect and bold to the imperishable stars. But these faithful mothers, loyal to their duties in scorn of their own personal interests, oftentimes exulted in tossing away from them, as a worthless derelict, their womanly graces of figure and motion—dedicating and using up these graces as a fund for ransoming their daughters from all similar degradation in time to come.

much? On the contrary, man would have contributed nothing at all, but for that first elementary impulse by which Christianity awakened man's attention to the slumbering instincts of truth, started man's movement in the new direction, and moulded man's regenerated principles. To give one instance:—Public charity, the charity that grows out of tender and apprehensive sympathy with human sufferings—when did it commence, and where? Who first thought of it as a paramount duty for all who had any available power—as an awful right, clamorously pleading its pangs night and day in the ear of God and man? What voice, melodious as the harps of Paradise,—voice which "all the company of heaven" must have echoed with a choral antiphony,—first of all insisted on cold and hunger as dreadful realities afflicting poor women and innocent children? It was the voice of one that sat upon a throne; and he was the first man, having power to realise his benign purposes, that read in the rubric of man's duties any call for such purposes. But why it was that *he* first read the secret writing which the whole pagan world, Rome and insolent Greece, had so obstinately ignored, suddenly becomes clear as daylight, when we learn that he—the inaugurator of eleemosynary aid to the afflictions of man—was the first son of Christianity that sat upon a throne. Yes, Constantine it was, earliest of Christian princes, that first[1] of all invested

[1] "*Constantine that first*":—But let me warn the reader not to fancy that the public largesses of corn to the humbler citizens of Rome had intercepted the possibility of this precedency for Constantine by many generations before he was known, or even before Christianity was revealed. There was no vestige of charity in the Roman distributions of grain. These distributions moved upon the same impulse as the *sportulæ* of the great oligarchic houses, and the *donatives* of princely officers to their victorious soldiery upon great anniversaries, or upon accessions to the throne, or upon adoptions of successors, &c. All were political, oftentimes rolling through the narrowest grooves of intrigue, and so far from contemplating any collateral or secondary purpose of charity that the most earnest inquiry on such occasions was—to find pretexts for excluding men from the benefit of the bounty. The primary thought was—who should *not* be admitted to participate in the dole. And at any rate none *were* admitted but citizens in the most rigorous and the narrowest sense. *Constantine* it was!—I do not certainly know that I have anywhere called the reader's attention to another great monument which connected the name of

Pauperism with the majesty of an organ amongst political forces, on the scriptural warrant that the poor should never cease out of the land,—Constantine that conferred upon misery, as a mighty potentate dwelling for ever in the skirts

Constantine by a separate and hardly noticed tie with the propagation of Christianity. What name is it that, being still verdant and most interesting to all the nations of Christendom, serves as a daily memorial to refresh our reverence for the emperor Constantine? What but his immortal foundation of *Constantinople*, imposed upon the ruins of the elder city Byzantium, in the year of Christ 313, now therefore in the 1565th year of its age; which city of Constantinople is usually regarded, by those who have science comprehensive enough for valuing its various merits, as enjoying the most august site, and circumstantial advantages in reference to climate, commerce, navigation, sovereign policy, and centralisation, on this planet—with the doubtful reservation of one single South American station, viz. that of the Brazilian city Rio Janeiro (or, as we usually call it, Rio). Doubtless these magnificent natural endowments did much to influence the choice of Constantine; and yet I believe that no economic advantages, even though greater and more palpable, would have been sufficient to disengage his affections from a scene so consecrated by grand historical recollections as Rome, had not one overwhelming repulsion, ineradicably Roman, violently disenchanted him for ever. This turned upon religion. *Rome*, it was found, *could not be depaganised*. Too profound, too inveterately entangled with the very soil and deep substructions of Latium, were the old traditional records, promises, auguries, and mysterious splendours of concentrated Heathenism *in*, and *on*, and nine times *round about*, and 50 fathoms *below*, and countless fathoms in upper air *above*, this most memorable of capital cities. Jupiter Capitolinus, the Sibyl's Books, which for Roman minds were authentic, the dread cloister of Vestal Virgins, Jupiter Stator, and the undeniable omen of the Twelve Vultures,[1]—centuries of mysterious sympathy between dim records and dim inquiries,—could no more be washed away from the credulous heart of the Roman *plebs* than the predictions of Nostradamus from the expecting and listening faith of Catherine de' Medici and her superstitious court. In short, fifty baptisms could

1 "*Omen of the twelve vultures*":—The reader must not allow himself to be repelled from the plain historic truth by foolish reproaches of superstition or credulity. The fact of twelve vultures having appeared under ceremonial circumstances, at what may be considered the inauguration of Rome, and was so understood at the time, is as certain as any fact the best attested in the history of Rome. And, as it repeatedly announced itself during the lapse of these twelve centuries, when as yet they were far from being completed, there cannot be a reasonable doubt that a most impressive coincidence did occur between the early prophecy and its extraordinary fulfilment. In a gross general statement, such as *can* be made in a single sentence, we may describe the duration of Rome, from Romulus to Christ, as 750 years; which leaves about 450 to be accounted for, in order to make up the tale of the twelve vultures. And pretty exactly that number of 450, plus 2 or 3 suppose, measures the interval between Christ and Augustulus.

of populous cities, the privilege of appearing by a representative and a spokesman in the council-chamber of the Empire.

Had, then, the Pagans of all generations before Constantine, or more strictly before the Christian era, no charity, no pity, neither money nor verbal sympathy at the service of despairing poverty? No, none at all. Supposing, for instance, any Gentile establishments to have existed up and down Greece, or Egypt, or the Grecianised regions of Asia Minor and Syria, at the Apostolic era, these would undoubtedly have been referred to by the apostles as furnishing models to emulate, or to copy with improvements, or utterly and earnestly to ignore, under terror of contagion from some of those fundamental errors in their plan theoretically, or in their administration practically, which might be counted on as pretty certain to pollute the executive details, however decent in their first originating purpose. Upon any one of some half-dozen motives, St. Paul, in his boundless activity of inquiry and comparison, would have found cause to mention such institutions. And, again, in the next generation, under the Emperor Trajan, Pliny would have had abundant ground for dwelling on this early *communism* and system of reciprocal charity established amongst the Christians, had he not recoiled from thus emblazoning the beneficence of an obnoxious sect, when conscious that no parallel public bounty could be pleaded as a set-off on the side of those who desired to persecute this new-born sect. There remains, moreover, a damnatory evidence on this point, much more unequivocal and direct, in the formal systems of ethics still surviving from the Pagan world under the noonday splendour of its civilisation: Aristotle's, for example, at the epoch of

not have washed away the deep-seated scrofula of Paganism in Rome. Constantine therefore wisely drew away a select section of the population to the quiet waters of the Propontis (*the Sea of Marmŏra*, which oblige me by pronouncing as if an imperfect rhyme to *armoury*, not as if the *o* in the penult. were accented).—And thus, by a double service to Christianity—viz. by a solemn institution of charitable contributions to the poor, as their absolute right under the Christian law, and by a wise shepherd's segregation of diseased members from his flock—he earned meritoriously, and did not win by luck, that fortunate destiny which has locked up his name into that of the regenerated Rome, the earliest Christian city, and the mother of the Second, or the Oriental, Roman Empire.

Alexander the Great ; and Cicero's, at a corresponding period of refinement three centuries later in Rome. Now, in these elaborate systems, which have come down to us unmutilated, no traces are to be found of any recognised duty moving in the direction of public aid and relief to the sufferers from poverty. Our wicked friend Kikero,[1] for instance, who *was* so bad, but *wrote* so well, who *did* such naughty things, but *said* such pretty things, has himself noticed in one of his letters, with petrifying coolness, that he knew of destitute old women in Rome who went without tasting food for one, two, or even three days. After making such a statement, did Kikero not tumble down-stairs, and break at least three of his legs, in his hurry to call a public meeting for the redressing of so cruel a grievance? Not he : the man continued to strut up and down his library, in a toga as big as the "Times" newspaper, singing out—

"Cedant arma togæ ; concedat laurea laudi."

And, if Kikero noticed the case at all, it was only as a fact that might be interesting to natural philosophers, or to speculators on the theories of a *plenum* and a *vacuum*, or to Greek physicians investigating the powers of the human stomach, or to connoisseurs in old women. No drachma or denarius, be well assured, ever left the secret lockers or hidden fobs of this discreet barrister upon so blind a commission as that of carrying consolation to a superfluous old woman—not enjoying so much as the *jus suffragii*. By a thousand indirect notices, it might be shown that an act of charity would, in

[1] It is interesting to observe, at this moment, how the proofs accumulate from the ends of the earth that the Roman C was always in value equal to K. The imperial name of Cæsar has survived in two separate functions. It is found as a family name rooted amongst oriental peoples, and is always Keyser. But also it has survived as an official title, indicating the sovereign ruler. At this moment, from Milan, under the shadow of the Alps, to Lucknow, under the shadow of the Himalayas, this immortal Roman name popularly expresses the office of the supreme magistrate. *Keyser* is the current titular designation of the king who till lately reigned over Oude ; and *der Kayser*, on the fiction which made the Empire of Germany a true lineal successor to the Western Roman Empire, has always indicated the Emperor,—once German, now simply Austrian.

the eyes of Pagan moralists, have taken rank as an act of drunkenness.

Yes, the great planetary orb of charity in its most comprehensive range—not that charity only which interprets for the best all doubtful symptoms, not that charity only which "hopeth all things," and which, even to the relenting criminal, gives back an opening for recovering his lost position by showing that for *him* also there is shining in the distance a reversionary hope—but that charity also which brings aid that is effectual, and sympathy that is unaffected, to the households sitting in darkness: this great diffusive orb and magnetic centre of every perfect social system first wheeled into its place and functions on that day when Christianity shot above the horizon. But the idea, but the principle, but the great revolutionary fountain of benediction, was all that Christianity furnished, or needed to furnish. The executive arrangements, the endless machinery, for diffusing, regulating, multiplying, exalting this fountain—all this belongs no longer to the Bible, but to man. And why not? What blindness to imagine that revelation would have promoted its own purposes by exonerating man from *his* share in the total work. So far from *that*, thus and no otherwise it was—viz. by laying upon man a necessity for co-operating with heaven—that the compound object of this great revolution had any chance of being accomplished. It was as much the object of Christianity that he who exercised charity should be bettered as he that benefited by charity—the agent equally with the object. Only in that way is Shakspere's fine anticipation realised of a twofold harvest, and a double moral won; for the fountain itself

> "is twice blessed:
> It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes.

But, if Providence had reserved to itself the whole of the work—not merely the first suggestion of a new and divine magnetism for interlinking reciprocally all members of the human family, but had also appropriated the whole process of deducing and distributing into separate rills the irrigation of God's garden upon earth,—in that act it would have defeated on the largest scale its own scheme of training for man; just as much as if (according to a former speculation of mine)

God, by condescending to teach science in the Bible (astronomy suppose, chronology, or geology), had thus at one blow, besides defrauding the true and avowed mission of the Bible, self-counteractingly stepped in to solve his own problems, and thus had violently intercepted those very difficulties which had been strewed in man's path *seriatim*, and so as to advance by measured increments of difficulty, for the specific purpose of applying graduated irritations to the stimulation of man's intellect. Equally in the training of his moral habits and in the development by successive steps of his intellect, man and the religion of man must move by co-operation ; and it cannot be the policy or the true meaning of revelation to work towards any great purpose in man's destiny otherwise than through the co-agency of man's faculties, improved in the whole extent of their capacities. This case, therefore (of charity arising suddenly as a new command to man), teaches three great inferences :—

First, the power of a religion to stimulate vast developments in man, when itself stimulated by a social condition not sleeping and passive, but in a vigilant state of healthy activity.

Secondly, that, if all continued cases of interchangeable development—that is, of the Bible downwards upon man, or reversely of man upwards upon the Bible and its interpretation—may be presumed to argue a concurrent action between Providence and man, it follows that the *human* element in the co-agency will always account for any admixture of evil or error, without impeaching in any degree the doctrine of a general overriding inspiration. For instance, I see little reason to doubt that economically the Apostles had erred, and through their very simplicity of heart had erred, as to that joint-stock company which they, so ignorant of the world, had formed in an early stage of the infant church, and that Ananias and Sapphira had fallen victims to a perplexity and a collision between their engagements and their natural rights, such as overthrew their too delicate sensibilities. But, if this were really so, the human element carries away from the divine all taint of reproach. *There* lies one mode of benefit from this joint agency of man and Providence.[1]

[1] Coleridge, as may be seen in his "Notes on English Divines,"

Thirdly, we see here illustrated one amongst innumerable cases of development applicable to the Bible. And this power of development in general proves one other thing, of the last importance to prove—viz. the power of Christianity to work in co-operation with time and social progress—to work variably, according to the endless variation of time and place. And this is the exact *shibboleth* of a spiritual religion.

For, in conclusion, here lies a consideration of deadliest importance. On reviewing the history of false religions, and inquiring what it was that ruined them, or caused them to tremble, or to exhibit premonitory signs of coming declension, rarely or never amongst such causes has been found any open exhibition of violence. The gay mythologic religion of Greece melted away in silence; that of Egypt, more revolting to unfamiliarised sensibilities, more gloomy, and apparently reposing on some basis of more solemn and less allegoric reality, exhaled like a dream—*i.e.* without violence, by *internal* decay. I mean, that no violence existed where the religion fell, and there *was* violence where it did *not*. For even the dreadful fanaticism of the early Mahometan sultans in Hindostan, before the accession of Baber and his Mogul successors from the house of Timour, failed to crush the monstrous idolatries of the Hindoos. All false religions have perished by their own hollowness, and by internal decay, under the searching trials applied by life and the changes of life, by social mechanism and the changes of social mechanism, which wait in ambush upon *every* mode of religion. False modes of religion could not respond to the demands exacted from them, or the questions emerging. One after one they have collapsed, as if by palsy, and have sunk away under new aspects of society and new necessities of man which they were not able to face. Commencing in one condition of society, in one set of feelings, and in one system of ideas, they sank instinctively under any great change in these

though free in a remarkable degree, for one so cloudy in his speculative flights, from any spirit of licentious tampering with the text of the New Testament, or with its orthodox explanation, was yet deeply impressed with the belief that the apostles had gone far astray in their first provision for the pecuniary necessities of the infant Church; and he went so far as to think that they had even seriously crippled its movements by accumulations of debt that might have been evaded.

elements, to which they had no natural power of plastic self-accommodation. A false religion furnished always a key to one subordinate lock; but a religion that is true will prove a master-key for all locks alike. This transcendental principle, through which Christianity transfers herself so readily from climate to climate,[1] from land to land, from century to century, from the simplicity of shepherds to the utmost refinement of philosophers, carries with it a corresponding necessity (corresponding, I mean, to such infinite flexibility) of an infinite development. The Paganism of Rome, so flattering and so sustaining to the Roman nationality and pride, satisfied no spiritual necessity: dear to the Romans as citizens, it was at last killing to them as men.

[1] "*From climate to climate*":—Sagacious Mahometans are often troubled and scandalised by the secret misgiving that, after all, their Prophet must have been an ignorant man. It is clear that the case of a cold climate had never occurred to him; and even a hot one was conceived by him under conditions too palpably limited. Many of the Bedouin Arabs complain of ablutions incompatible with their half-waterless position. Mahomet, coming from the Hedjas, a rich tract, and through that benefit the fruitful mother of noble horses, knew no more of the arid deserts and Zaarrahs than do I. These oversights of its founder would have proved fatal to Islamism had Islamism succeeded in producing a high civilisation.

CASUISTRY [1]

Part I

It is remarkable, in the sense of being noticeable and interesting, but not in the sense of being surprising, that Casuistry has fallen into disrepute throughout all Protestant lands. This disrepute is a result partly due to the healthier morality which usually [2] follows in the train of the Protestant faith. So far it is honourable, and an evidence of superior illumination. But, in the excess to which it has been pushed, we may trace also a blind and fanatical reaction of the horror inspired by the abuses of the Popish Confessional. Unfortunately for the interests of scientific ethics, the first cultivators of Casuistry had been those who kept in view the professional service of auricular confession. Their purpose was to assist the reverend confessor in appraising the quality of doubtful actions, in order that he might properly adjust his scale of counsel, of warning, of reproof, and of penance. Some, therefore, in pure simplicity and conscientious discharge of the duty they had assumed,

[1] Appeared originally in *Blackwood* for October 1839 and February 1840: reprinted by De Quincey in 1858, in vol. viii of his Collected Writings.—M.

[2] "*Usually*":—We Protestants, being generally bigots where we happen to be sincere and earnest, have assumed it as a settled point that, wheresoever Protestant and Popish provinces lie intermingled with each other (as in Germany and in Switzerland), the transition from the first to the second, in all that argues order, industry, social activity, and public welfare, leaves an impression so powerfully advantageous to Protestantism as to resemble the alternate successions of sunlight and twilight. But candid observers, amongst whom is to be reckoned the late Dr. Arnold of Rugby, do not admit the truth of this representation—at least so far as regards Switzerland.

but others from lubricity of morals or the irritations of sensual curiosity, pushed their investigations into unhallowed paths of speculation. They held aloft a torch for exploring guilty recesses of human life which it is far better for us all to leave in their original darkness. Crimes that were often all but imaginary, extravagancies of erring passion that would never have been known as possibilities to the young and the innocent, were thus published in their most odious details. At first, it is true, the decent draperies of a dead language were suspended before these abominations: but sooner or later some knave was found, on mercenary motives, to tear away this partial veil; and thus the vernacular literature of most nations in Southern Europe was gradually polluted with revelations that had been originally made in the avowed service of religion. Indeed, there was one aspect of such books which proved even more extensively disgusting. Speculations pointed to monstrous offences bore upon their very face and frontispiece the intimation that they related to cases rare and anomalous. But sometimes Casuistry pressed into the most hallowed recesses of common domestic life. The delicacy of youthful wives, for example, was often not less grievously shocked than the manliness of husbands, by refinements of monkish subtlety applied to cases never meant for religious cognisance—but far better left to the decision of good feeling, of nature, and of pure household morality. Even this revolting use of Casuistry, however, did less to injure its name and pretensions than a persuasion, pretty generally diffused, that the main purpose and drift of this science was a sort of hair-splitting process, by which doubts might be applied to the plainest duties of life, or questions raised as to the extent of their obligations, for the single benefit of those who sought to evade them. A casuist was viewed, in short, as a kind of lawyer or special pleader in morals, such as those who, in London, are known as Old Bailey practitioners, called in to manage desperate cases, to suggest all available advantages, to raise doubt or distinctions where simple morality saw no room for either, and generally to teach the art, in nautical phrase, of sailing as near the wind as might be found possible without absolutely foundering.

Meantime it is certain that Casuistry, when soberly applied, is not only a beneficial as well as a very interesting study, but that, by whatever title, it is absolutely indispensable to the *practical* treatment of morals. We may reject the name ; the thing we cannot reject. And accordingly the custom has been, in all English treatises on Ethics, to introduce a good deal of Casuistry under the idea of special illustration, but without any reference to Casuistry as a formal branch of research. Indeed, as society grows complex, the uses of Casuistry become more urgent. Even Cicero could not pursue his theme through such barren generalisations as entirely to evade all notice of special cases ; and Paley has given the chief interest to his very loose investigations of morality by scattering a selection of such cases over the whole field of his discussion.

The necessity of Casuistry might, in fact, be deduced from the very origin and genesis of the word. First came the general law or rule of action. This was like the major proposition of a syllogism. But next came a special instance or *case*, so stated as to indicate whether it did or did not fall under the general rule. This, again, was exactly the minor proposition in a syllogism. For example, in logic we say, as the major proposition in a syllogism, *Man is mortal.* This is the rule. And then "subsuming" (such is the technical phrase—*subsuming*) Socrates under the rule by a minor proposition—viz. Socrates is a man—we are able mediately to connect him with the predicate of that rule—viz. *ergo* Socrates is mortal.[1] Precisely upon this model arose Casuistry. A general rule, or major proposition, was laid down : suppose that he who killed any human being, except under the palliations X, Y,

[1] The ludicrous blunder of Reid (as first published by Lord Kames in his "Sketches"), and of countless others through the last seventy or eighty years, in their critiques on the Logic of Aristotle, has been to imagine that such illustrations of syllogism as these were meant for specimens of what syllogism could perform. What an elaborate machinery, it was said, for bringing out the merest self-evident truisms ! But just as reasonably it might have been objected, when a mathematician illustrated the process of addition by saying $3+4=7$, behold what pompous nothings ! These Aristotelian illustrations were *purposely* drawn from cases not open to dispute, and simply as exemplifications of the meaning : they were intentionally self-evident.

Z, was a murderer. Then, in a minor proposition, the special case of the suicide was considered. It was affirmed, or it was denied, that his case fell under some one of the palliations assigned. And then, finally, according to the negative or affirmative shape of this minor proposition, it was argued, in the conclusion, that the suicide was or was not a murderer. Out of these *cases—i.e.* oblique deflexions from the universal rule (which is also the grammarian's sense of the word *case*)—arose *Casuistry.*

After morality has done its very utmost in clearing up the grounds upon which it rests its decisions—after it has multiplied its rules to any possible point of circumstantiality —there will always continue to arise cases without end, in the shifting combinations of human action, about which a question will remain whether they do or do not fall under any of these rules. And the best way for seeing this truth illustrated on a broad scale, the shortest way, and the most decisive, is to point our attention to one striking fact: viz. that all law, as it exists in every civilised land, is nothing *but* casuistry. Simply because new cases are for ever arising to raise new doubts whether they do or do not fall under the rule of law, therefore it is that law is so inexhaustible. The law terminates a dispute for the present by a decision of a court (which constitutes our "*common law*"), or by an express act of the legislature (which constitutes our "*statute law*"). For a month or two matters flow on smoothly. But then comes a new case, not contemplated or not verbally provided for in the previous rule. It is varied by some feature of difference. This feature, it is suspected, makes no *essential* difference: substantially it may be the old case. Ay, but that is the very point to be decided. And so arises a fresh suit at law, and a fresh decision. For example, after many a decision and many a statute (all arising out of cases supervening upon cases), suppose that great subdivision of jurisprudence called the Bankrupt Laws to have been gradually matured. It has been settled, suppose, that he who exercises a trade, and no other whatsoever, shall be entitled to the benefit of the Bankrupt Laws. So far is fixed; and people vainly imagine that at length a station of rest is reached, and that in this direction at least the onward

march of law is barred. Not at all. Suddenly a schoolmaster becomes insolvent, and attempts to avail himself of privileges as a technical bankrupt. But then arises a resistance on the part of those who are interested in resisting; and the question is raised whether the calling of a schoolmaster can be legally considered a trade. This also is settled: it is solemnly determined that a schoolmaster is a tradesman. But next arises a case, in which, from peculiar variation of the circumstances, it is doubtful whether the teacher can technically be considered a schoolmaster. Suppose that case settled: a schoolmaster, sub-distinguished as an X Y schoolmaster, is adjudged to come within the meaning of the law. But scarcely is this sub-variety disposed of when up rises some de-complex case which is a sub-variety of this sub-variety: and so on for ever.

Hence, therefore, we may see the shortsightedness of Paley, in quoting with approbation, and as if it implied a reproach, that the Mussulman religious code contains "not less than seventy-five thousand traditional precepts." True: but, if this statement shows an excess of circumstantiality in the moral systems of Mussulmans, that result expresses a fact which Paley overlooks—viz. that their moral code is in reality their legal code. It is by aggregation of *cases*, by the everlasting depullulation of fresh sprouts and shoots from old boughs, that this enormous accumulation takes place; and, therefore, the apparent anomaly is exactly paralleled in our own unmanageable superstructure of law, and in the French supplements to their Code, which have already far overbuilt the Code itself. If names were disregarded, we and the Mahometans are sailing in the very same boat.

Casuistry, therefore, is the science of cases, or of those special varieties which are for ever changing the face of actions as contemplated in general rules. The tendency of such variations is, in all states of complex civilisation, to absolute infinity.[1] It is my present purpose to state a few

[1] "*To absolute infinity*":—I have noticed our own vast pile of law, and that of the French. But neither of us has yet reached the alarming amount of the Roman law, under which the very powers of social movement threatened to break down. Courts could not decide, advocates could not counsel, so interminable was becoming the task

of such cases, in order to fix attention upon the interest and the importance which surround them. No modern book of Ethics can be worth notice unless in so far as it selects and argues the more prominent of such cases, as they offer themselves in the economy of daily life. For I repeat that the name, the word, Casuistry, may be evaded, but the thing cannot ; nor *is* it evaded in our daily conversations.

1. *The Case of the Jaffa Massacre.*—No case in the whole compass of Casuistry has been so much argued to and fro—none has been argued with so little profit ; for, in fact, the main elements of the moral decision have been left out of view. Let me state the circumstances :—On the 11th of February 1799, Napoleon, then and for seven months before in military possession of Egypt, began his march from Cairo to Syria. His object was to break the force of any Turkish invasion, by taking it in fractions. It had become notorious to every person in Egypt that the Porte rejected the French pretence of having come for the purpose of quelling Mameluke rebellion,—the absurdity of which, apart from its ludicrous Quixotism, was evident in the most practical way, viz. by the fact that the whole revenues of Egypt were more than swallowed up by the pay and maintenance of the French Army. What could the Mamelukes have done worse ? Hence it had become certain that the Turks would send an expedition to Egypt ; and Napoleon, viewing the garrisons in Syria as the advanced guard of such an expedition, saw the best chance for general victory in meeting these troops beforehand and destroying them in detail. About nineteen days brought him within view of the Syrian fields. On the last day of February he slept at the Arimathea of the Gospel. In a day or two later his army was before Jaffa (the Joppa of the Crusaders)—a weak place, but of some military interest,[1] from the accident of being the

of investigation. This led to the great Digest of Justinian. But, had Roman society advanced in wealth, extent, and social development, instead of retrograding, the same result would have returned in a worse shape. The same result now menaces England, and will soon menace her much more.

[1] "*Of some military interest*" :—It is singular that some peculiar interest has always settled upon Jaffa, no matter who was the military

very first fortified town to those entering Palestine from the side of Egypt. On the 4th of March this place was invested; on the 6th, barely forty-eight hours after, it was taken by storm. This fact is in itself important; because it puts an end to the pretence so often brought forward that the French army had been irritated by a long resistance. Yet, supposing the fact to have been so, how often in the history of war must every reader have met with cases where honourable terms were granted to an enemy merely on account of his obstinate resistance? But then here, it is said, the resistance was wilfully pushed to the arbitration of a storm. Even that might be otherwise stated; but, suppose it true, a storm in military law confers some rights upon the assailants which else they would not have had,—rights, however, which cease with the day of storming. Nobody denies that the French army might have massacred all whom they met in arms at the time and during the agony of storming. But the question is, Whether a resistance of forty-eight hours could create the right, or in the least degree palliate the atrocity, of putting prisoners to death in cold blood? Four days after the storming, when all things had settled back into the quiet routine of ordinary life, men going about their affairs as usual, confidence restored, and, above all things, after the faith of a Christian army had been pledged to these prisoners that not a hair of their heads should be touched, the imagination is appalled by this wholesale butchery; even the apologists of Napoleon are shocked by the amount of murder, though justifying its principle. They admit that there were two divisions of the prisoners—one of fifteen hundred, the other of two thousand five hundred.[1] Their

leader of the time, or what the object of the struggle. From Julius Cæsar Joppa enjoyed some special privileges and immunities. About a century after, in the latter years of Nero, a most tragical catastrophe happened at Joppa to the Syrian pirates, by which the very same number perished as in the Napoleon massacre—viz. something about 4000. In the 200 years of the Crusades Joppa revived again into military verdure. The fact is that the shore of Syria is pre-eminently deficient in natural harbours, or facilities for harbours: those which exist have been formed by art, and after severe contest with the opposition of nature. Hence their extreme paucity, and hence their disproportionate importance in every possible war.

[1] But this was a merely popular computation, adapted to ordinary

combined amount is equal to a little army ; in fact, *numerically*, it repeats pretty exactly that noble little army of ours which opened the great Titan war waged with Napoleon by winning the battle of Maida in Calabria. They composed a force equal to about six English regiments of infantry on the common establishment. Every man of these four thousand soldiers, chiefly brave Albanians—every man of this little army was basely, brutally, in the very spirit of abject poltroonery, murdered—murdered as foully as the infants of Bethlehem ; resistance being quite hopeless, not only because they had surrendered their arms, but also because, in reliance on Christian honour, they had quietly submitted to have their hands confined with ropes behind their backs. If this blood did not lie heavy on Napoleon's heart in his dying hours, it must have been because a conscience originally callous had been seared by the very number of his atrocities.

Now, having stated the case, let me review the casuistical apologies put forward. What, it is demanded, was to be done with these prisoners ? What *could* be done ? There lay the difficulty. Could they be retained in confinement, according to the common usage with regard to prisoners ? No ; for there was a scarcity of provisions, barely sufficient for the French army itself. Could they be transported to Egypt by sea ? No ; for two English line-of-battle ships, the Theseus and the Tiger, each (I believe) carrying eighty guns, were cruising in the offing, and watching the interjacent seas of Egypt and Syria. Could they be transported to Egypt by land ? No ; for it was not possible to spare a sufficient escort ; besides, this plan would have included the separate difficulty as to food. Finally, then, as the sole resource left, could they be turned adrift ? No ; for this was but another mode of saying, " Let us fight the matter over again ; reinstate yourselves as our enemies ; let us leave Jaffa *re infecta*, and let all begin again *de novo*"—since, assuredly, say the French apologists, within a fortnight or

circumstances, which rendered punctilious accuracy useless, or, unless with a special justifying purpose, pedantic. The true number massacred was 4200 : counting by the common military scale, that means seven battalions.

less from that date, the prisoners would have been swelling the ranks of those Turkish forces whom Napoleon had reason to expect in front.

Before taking one step in reply to these arguments, let me cite two parallel cases from history: already for themselves separately the cases are interesting; and they have an *occasional* interest beside appropriate to the casuistical difficulty before us, as showing how other armies, not Christian, have treated the self-same difficulty in practice. The first shall be a leaf taken from the great book of Pagan experience; the second from Mahometan: and both were cases, be it observed, in which the parties called on to cut the knot had been irritated to madness by the parties concerned in their decision.

1. *The Pagan Decision.*—In that Jewish War of more than three years' duration which terminated in the memorable siege and destruction of Jerusalem [A.D. 67—A.D. 70], two cities on the Lake of Gennesaret were besieged by Vespasian. One of these was Tiberias, the other Tarichæ. Both had been defended with desperation; and from their peculiar situation upon water and amongst profound precipices, the Roman battering apparatus had not been found applicable to their walls. Consequently the resistance and the loss to the Romans had been unexampled. At the latter siege Vespasian was present in person. Six thousand five hundred had perished of the enemy. A number of prisoners remained, amounting to about forty thousand. What was to be done with them? A great council was held, at which the commander-in-chief presided, assisted (as we shall soon find Napoleon to have been) by his whole staff. Many of the officers were urgent for having the whole put to death; they used the very arguments of the French—"that, being people now destitute of habitations, they would infallibly persecute into war, by daily importunities, any cities which might receive them"; fighting, in fact, henceforward upon a double impulse—viz. the original one of insurrection, and a new one of revenge. Vespasian was sensible of all this; and he himself remarked that, if they had any indulgence of flight conceded, they would assuredly abuse that indulgence into a malicious advantage against its magnanimous authors. But

still, as an answer to all objections, as a paramount argument, he insisted on the solitary fact that he had pledged the Roman faith for the security of their lives; "and to offer violence after he had given them his right hand was what he could not bear to think of." Such are the simple words ascribed to him. In the end, overpowered by his council, Vespasian made a sort of compromise. Twelve hundred, as persons who could not have faced the hardships of captivity and travel, he gave up to the sword. Six thousand select young men were transported as labourers into Greece,—in fact, as *navvies*, with a view to Nero's scheme, then in agitation, for cutting through the Isthmus of Corinth; the main body, amounting to thirty thousand, were sold for slaves; and all the rest, who happened to be subjects of Agrippa,[1] as a mark of courtesy to that prince, were placed at his disposal.—Now, in this case it will be alleged that, perhaps, the main feature of Napoleon's case was not realised—viz. the want of provisions. Every Roman soldier carried on his shoulder a load of seventeen days' provisions, expressly in preparation for such dilemmas; and Palestine was then rank with population gathered into towns. This objection will be noticed immediately; but, meantime, let it be remembered that the prisoners personally appeared before their conquerors in far worse circumstances than the garrison of Jaffa, except as to the one circumstance (in which both parties stood on equal ground) of having had their lives guaranteed. For the prisoners of Gennesaret were chiefly aliens and fugitives from justice, who had no national or local interest in the cities which they had tempted or forced into insurrection; they

[1] "*Of Agrippa*":—*i.e.* not that Agrippa who married the sole daughter of Augustus Cæsar—*he* had long been in his grave—but of Herod Agrippa, grandson to that original Herod who seems to have been as pretty a murderer and as tiger-like as any ruffian that you would wish *not* to meet in a lonely lane. His ambition might seriously have seemed to form a bright model for the future sepoy. At Bethlehem he showed them how to murder infants valiantly; but subsequently he improved, for he rose to the bright idea of murdering grown-up women, his wife Mariamne for one, and even men—Mariamne's brother, and two of his own sons. This man history denominates Herod the Great: obviously for his artistic merit as a first-rate murderer, since of other accomplishments he had confessedly none at all.

were clothed with no military character whatever; in short, they were pure vagrant incendiaries; or, in short (to say the worst thing possible), they were the *budmashes* of Syria,—which means (as our Sepoy Apocalypse has taught us[1]) the houseless ruffians of Asiatic cities, such as Delhi, the ferocious but cowardly Ishmaels of imperfect civilisation. And the populous condition of Palestine availed little towards the execution of Vespasian's sentence; nobody in that land would have bought such prisoners; nor, if they would, were there any means available, in the agitated state of the Jewish people, for maintaining their purchase. It would therefore be necessary to escort them to Cæsarea, as the nearest Roman port for shipping them; thence, perhaps, to Alexandria, in order to benefit by the corn vessels; and from Alexandria the voyage to remoter places would be pursued at great cost and labour—all so many objections exactly corresponding to those of Napoleon, and yet all overruled by the single consideration of a Roman (viz. a Pagan) right hand pledged to the sacred fulfilment of a promise. As to the twelve hundred old and helpless people massacred in cold blood, as regarded themselves it was a merciful doom, and one which many of the Jerusalem captives afterwards eagerly courted. But still it was a shocking necessity. It was felt to be such by many Romans themselves. Vespasian, not yet emperor, was in that instance overruled; but with a beneficial effect that perhaps long outlived that transitory Flavian family. For the horror which settled upon the mind of Titus, his eldest son, from that very case, made *him* tender of human life ever after; made him anxiously merciful, through the great tragedies which were now beginning to unrol themselves; and, although *he* personally was an apparition of brightness and of vernal promise that passed away too early for his own generation, nevertheless through succeeding generations his example availed to plant kindness and mercy amongst imperatorial virtues.

[1] The "Sepoy Apocalypse" is, of course, the Indian Mutiny of 1857-8. De Quincey was full of that subject when he was revising this paper in 1858 (see *ante*, Vol. IV, p. 10); and he modified the original language of the paper at this point so as to bring in the allusion.—M.

2. *The Mahometan Decision.*—The Emperor Charles V, at different periods, twice invaded the piratical states in the north of Africa. The last of these invasions, directed against Algiers, failed miserably, covering the emperor with shame, and strewing both land and sea with the wrecks of his great armament. But, six years before, he had conducted a most splendid and successful expedition against Tunis, once the seat of mighty Carthage, but then occupied by Heyradin Barbarossa, a valiant corsair and a prosperous usurper. Barbarossa had an irregular force of fifty thousand men; the Emperor had a veteran army, but not acclimatised, and not much above one-half as numerous. Things tended, therefore, strongly to an equilibrium. Such were the circumstances—such was the position on each side: Barbarossa, with his usual adventurous courage, and with Mahometan insolence, was drawing out of Tunis in order to assail the assailant; precisely at that moment occurred the question of what should be done with the Christian slaves. A stronger case cannot be imagined: they were ten thousand fighting men; and, the more horrible it seemed to murder so many defenceless people, the more dreadfully did the danger strike upon the imagination. It was their number which appalled the conscience of those who speculated on their murder; but precisely *that* it was—the formidable number, when pressed upon the recollection,—which appalled the prudence of their Moorish masters. Barbarossa himself, familiar with bloody actions, never hesitated for a moment about the proper course; "massacre to the last man" was *his* proposal. But his officers thought otherwise; they were brave men; "and," says Robertson, "they all approved warmly of his intention to fight; but, inured as they were to scenes of bloodshed, the barbarity of his proposal filled them with horror; and Barbarossa, from the dread of irritating *them*, consented to spare the lives of the slaves." Now, in this case, the penalty attached to mercy, on the assumption that it should turn out unhappily for those who so nobly determined to stand the risk, cannot be more tragically expressed than by saying that it *did* turn out unhappily. We need not doubt that the merciful officers were otherwise rewarded; but for this world, and for the

successes of this world, the ruin was total. Barbarossa was defeated in the battle which ensued; flying pell-mell to Tunis with the wrecks of his army, he found these very ten thousand Christians in possession of the fort and town; they turned his own artillery upon himself; and his overthrow was sealed by that one act of mercy—so unwelcome from the very first to his own Napoleonish temper.

Thus we see how this very case of Jaffa had been settled by Pagan and Mahometan casuists, where courage and generosity happened to be habitually prevalent. Now, turning back to the pseudo-Christian army, let us very briefly review the arguments for *them*. First, there were no provisions. But how happened that? or how is it proved? Feeding the prisoners from the 6th to the 10th inclusively of March proves that there was no instant want. And how was it, then, that Napoleon had run his calculations so narrowly? The prisoners were just 33 per cent on the total French army as originally detached from Cairo. Some had already perished of that French detachment; and in a few weeks more one-half of it had perished, or six thousand men, whose rations were hourly becoming disposable for the prisoners. Secondly (a most important consideration!), resources must have been found in Jaffa; if not, why not? But, thirdly, if Jaffa were so ill provisioned, how had Jaffa ever dreamed of standing a siege? And, knowing its condition, as Napoleon must have done from deserters and otherwise, how came he to adopt so needless a measure as that of storming the place? Three days must have compelled it to surrender upon any terms, if it could be really true that, after losing vast numbers of its population in the assault (for it was the bloodshed of the assault which originally suggested the interference of the aides-de-camp [1]), Jaffa was not able to

[1] "*Aides-de-camp*":—Their names were, to the best of my remembrance, Croisier, and a Pole, whose name began with *Sulky*, and no doubt it ended in *iski* or *owski*. Or, according to the witty suggestion of the late Lord Robertson (a Scottish judge), for a *general* Polish name that should save all trouble of special and individual punctilios, you might call him Count *Cask-o'-Whisky*—[De Quincey had here in his mind one of the many stories told of the Scottish judge Lord Robertson (1794-1855) in those days of his more riotous jocularity when he was still but Patrick Robertson, the Falstaff of the Scottish

allow half-rations even to a *part* of its garrison for a few weeks. What was it meant that the whole of this garrison should have done, had Napoleon simply blockaded it? Through all these contradictions we see the truth looming

bar. Standing, it is said, just inside the door of an Edinburgh assembly room, when it was filling for a great Polish dinner or ball to which not a few titled Polish refugees had been invited, and seeing among the late arrivals, in the wake of a cluster of these, two well-known Edinburgh citizens,—one of them a dentist and the other a spirit-dealer,—he relieved the usher of the trouble of the two expected additional Polish names by himself announcing mischievously at the top of his voice "*Prince Pullatuski and Count Caskowiski.*"—M.]—The mention of these young men, both of whom came to a premature end, through consequences growing out of this diabolical massacre, reminds me of some subordinate incidents connected with the main event that merit a distinct notice. These two officers (upon what errand I could never certainly ascertain, if it were not to invite the Albanians to a timely surrender, upon such terms as must have been conceded to so large a body of men in possession of such manifest advantages) found the enemy occupying an immense barrack. From windows innumerable, and from openings drilled by the men for the momentary purpose, were levelled muskets without end at the two young emissaries. The story tells itself. The aides-de-camp were apparently no fire-eaters: but it is fair to recollect that even men who were such habitually and by a second nature would not have acknowledged any call for putting forth their gallantry on this occasion. What had they been sent for? Not surely to say, "Albanians, come out and be killed!" An idiot would not have surrendered such advantages for defence, without understanding that he was to receive some equivalent in return. The two officers, therefore, were perfectly right in the silent overture which they made: having no common language for expressing their message more distinctly, they hung out a white handkerchief. Now, is *that* a conventional symbol of pacific overtures, or is it not? If not, we British are sadly to blame: for a number of heavy-built Chinese have carried in their stern quarters, ever since 1842, some leaden remembrances of ours, which we were obliged to fire after them when running away from our white flag, and for having previously fired upon that flag. If we had not punished the brutes for refusing to receive the sole symbol agreed upon amongst nations for requesting a suspension of arms, we should not have delivered our important message, which concerned the whole Chinese people, to the end of the century. Had the Albanians fired upon the two bearers of this symbol, they would rightfully have suffered the death of criminals. *Not* firing, and voluntarily resigning all the means which they possessed for a desperate defence, such as must have cost the French two thousand lives at the least, they were understood to have made a bargain—to have sold a present advantage for a reversionary gain. Napoleon must have known this as well as they: perfectly he knew beforehand

large as the sun from behind a mist: it was not because provisions failed that Napoleon butchered four thousand young men in cold blood; it was because he wished to signalise his entrance into Palestine by a sanguinary act,

that this would be, and could not *but* be, the result of that else unintelligible mission which he had imposed upon his *aides*. Yet, as soon as they went back to head-quarters, and reported what had passed, he pretended to fall into a violent passion; and, in order to colour this simulated rage with an air of sincerity, he upbraided the young men in such terms of insult as impelled both to seek death. Sulkowski's particular fate I do not recollect; only the fact that he soon perished: Croisier courted and found *his* in the act of suddenly leaping on a wall or conspicuous eminence at the very moment when the gunners on the walls of Acre were presenting their port-fires; Napoleon, who saw the action, loudly commanded him to come down; but the sound of earthly commands had now become an empty terror for the poor aide-de-camp; he heard a deeper summons from a paramount Commander in other worlds; and in the next moment he was blown to atoms. Napoleon was, as regards moral capacities even for common generosity, much more for magnanimity, about the poorest creature ever known. He knew himself to have been grossly in the wrong as regarded the two *aides*, and yet he was never able to summon self-conquest enough to beg their pardon. Meantime, what had he really expected of them? Simply this: he had counted on it as a certainty that between two parties unable to communicate freely from want of a common language hot misunderstandings would arise, and that amongst so many impatient tempers, and so much boiling youthful blood, shots in showers would be fired, and the two aides-de-camp would perish. This was what he expected from them: and he meant to use this colourable pretence of a violated international usage as a summary plea for putting to death every man of the Albanians. Cruel was his disappointment when he found himself suddenly stripped of this anticipated plea, and, on the contrary, bound by a horrid pledge to some disgusting act of merciful indulgence. His first words of reproach to these two members of "his family" (such is the technical language) acknowledged this result. His very complaint, as against *them*, confessed by implication his obligation as regarded the Albanians. They (the two aides-de-camp) had landed him in difficulties inextricable. But, if he were still free to shoot the Albanians, how had they landed him in any difficulty at all? In the very torrent of his wrath he confessed the debt contracted to the enemy; and the wrath was solely on account of that debt. Yet, after all, he contrives, under cover of the feeble moral sense existing in the French army, to trample on this confessed contract. He calls together the leading officers of the army: he propounds the case, and the separate difficulties which met each variety of actions. The extra trouble, and the sacrifices, which would have accompanied any attempt on the part of eleven thousand men, having before them the bloody labours of a siege the most desperate,

such as might strike panic and ghastly horror far and wide, might resound through Syria as well as Egypt, and might paralyse the nerves of his enemies. Fourthly, it is urged that, if he had turned the prisoners loose, they would have

to watch and tend more than four thousand captives, were glaringly manifest: and under the temptations to perfidy, which disclosed themselves too highly and broadly, the French sense of honour was not strong enough to hold: the storm was mighty, and the anchors of their good faith all drove and "came home."

The closing scene is frightful: it might well be left to the reader's imagination, were it not for an incident which adds a crest and novelty of preternatural foulness to a drama which already offered a scenical display of wrong that Abana and Pharpar could never wash away, and no Jordan will ever cleanse. The Albanians, all young, of ages ranging from eighteen to twenty-two, easily divined their coming fate. Easily they read in the conscious eyes of their guilty jailers the horror which rose before them. No man can hear without affliction a case where, without the pretence of any crime, so ample a capacity of joy and ebullient life was summoned in one hour to take their last look of a sun that pours down upon Syria such eternity of splendour. Scarcely to have tasted from the cup of life before it was torn from their grasp by hellish fraud, and all the while to feel their unexhausted energies jubilating along their youthful veins, was an atrocity and an anomaly of suffering for which the bare ordinary justice and truthfulness of human nature has not left any gate open once in five centuries. They were shot down by platoons; and of course, in such a mode of executing the sentence, it happened unavoidably that a considerable number were not mortally wounded, or not so wounded as to cause instant death, or, in some instances, not wounded at all. Of these, some were despatched by a second, some by a third, *fusillade*. But a few, a dwindling arrear, escaped the bullets after all. And from this sad arrear, sighing, supplicating, languishing, rose up, as from a closing grave, the last narrowing scene of anguish, that furnished the last stings of torment, on the one side, to departing agony, and, on the other, to any repenting accomplice perhaps the first-born stings of remorse. Some, by those same bullets which had spared their persons, found their bonds cut asunder, and themselves suddenly liberated. Could not even this poor relic of the ghastly crowd have found mercy? No; mercy in no case; but for these was reserved a separate and parting fraud. The prisoners, having no other refuge, saw one (though but momentary) in the sea. The weltering billows might at least hide them from their enemies: those hellish faces, triumphing and laughing through the gathering mists of death, they might at least shut out. Not so: not thus were they to be dismissed. The Syrian sea is an inhospitable chamber of the great central Christian lake. Nothing rose to view but a barren rock. To this the despairing few swam out. Boats there were none for pursuit; and, had the Albanians maintained their hold till night, the merciful darkness would have covered their

faced him again in his next battle. How so? Prisoners without arms? But then, perhaps, they could have retreated upon Acre, where it is known that Djezzar, the Turkish pacha, had a great magazine of arms. That might have been dangerous, if any such retreat had been open. But surely the French army, itself under orders for Acre, could at least have intercepted the Acre route from the prisoners. No other remained but that through the defiles of Naplous. In that direction, however, there was no want of men. Beyond the mountains cavalry only were in use; and the prisoners had no horses, nor equestrian training, nor habits of acting as cavalry. In the defiles it was riflemen who were wanted, and the prisoners had no rifles; besides which, the line of the French operations never came near to that route. Then, again, if provisions were universally so scarce, how were the disarmed prisoners to obtain them (which the French allege that they would have done if turned adrift) on the simple allegation that they had fought unsuccessfully against the French?

But, finally, one conclusive argument there is against this damnable atrocity of Napoleon's, which in all future lives of him one may expect to see noticed—viz. that, if the circumstances of Palestine were such as to forbid the ordinary

return to land, and possibly their final evasion. But this was not to be: the French, if they could not pursue, could still persecute. Seeing the risk, they saw also a means for baffling it. By significant gestures they notified to the tenants of the rock an entire amnesty as regarded the past. What was done was done, and could not be recalled; but, for the future, let the fugitive prisoners put their trust in French honour, and come back to land. The fugitives did so; they came back—some trusting, some doubting. But strictly impartial was their welcome on shore. To the trusting there was no special favour; to the doubting no separate severity. All were massacred alike; and in one brief half-hour a loose scattering of soil rose as a winding-sheet over the forty-two hundred corpses that heaved convulsively here and there for a moment, and then all was still.

Frenchmen, this atrocity belongs to the holy soil of Palestine! Bethlehem is near, and sees it. Jerusalem is not far off, and reports it to the heavens. That man errs who believes that such deeds perish. They are found again in other generations. And, so long as France makes the author of that awful crime her idol, so long she makes his deeds her own.

usages of war, if (which I am far from believing) want of provisions made it indispensable to murder prisoners in cold blood, in that case a *Syrian war* became impossible to a man of honour, and the guilt commences from a higher point than Jaffa. If mercy were notoriously impossible in a Syrian war, in that case none but a ruffian would be found to offer his services for such a war. Already at Cairo, and in the elder stages of the expedition, planned in face of such afflicting necessities, we read the counsels of a murderer; of one carrying appropriately such a style of warfare towards the ancient country of the Assassins; of one not an apostate merely from Christian humanity, but from the lowest standard of soldierly honour. He and his friends abuse the upright and ill-used Sir Hudson Lowe as a jailer. But better a thousand times over to be a jailer, and faithful to one's trust, than to be the cut-throat of unarmed men.

One consideration remains, which I reserve to the end; because it has been universally overlooked, and because it is conclusive against Napoleon, even on his own hypothesis of an absolute necessity. In Vespasian's case—the case of having given his right hand as the symbolic pledge of an engagement to show mercy—it does not appear that he had gained anything for himself, or for his army, by his promise of safety to the enemy whose lives had been guaranteed, and who, on the faith of that guarantee, had surrendered their arms: he had simply gratified his own feelings, by holding out prospects of final escape. But Napoleon had absolutely seduced the four thousand men from a situation of power, from vantage-ground, by his treacherous promise. And, when the French apologists plead—"If we had dismissed the prisoners, we should soon have had to fight the battle over again"—they totally forget the state of the facts: they had not fought the battle at all: they had literally evaded the battle as to these prisoners: as many enemies as could have faced them *de novo* (viz. four thousand and two hundred), which constituted the temptation, so many had they bought off from fighting. Forty-two centuries of armed men, brave and despairing, and firing from windows, must have made prodigious havoc; and this havoc the French evaded by

a trick, by a perfidy, perhaps unexampled in the annals of honourable warfare.[1]

II. *Piracy.*—It is interesting to trace the revolutions of moral feeling. In the early stages of history we find piracy in high esteem. Thucydides tells us that λῃστεια, or robbery, when conducted *at sea* (*i.e.* robbery on non-Grecian people), was held in honour by his countrymen through elder ages. And this, in fact, is the true station, this point of feeling for primitive man, from which we ought to view the robberies and larcenies of savages. Captain Cook, though a good and often a wise man, erred exceedingly in this point. He took a plain Old Bailey view of the case, and very sincerely believed (as all sea-captains ever have done) that a savage must be a bad man, who would purloin anything that was not his own. Yet it is evident that the poor child of uncultured nature, who saw strangers descending, as it were from the moon, upon his aboriginal forests and lawns, must have viewed them under the same angle as the Greeks of old. They were no part of any system to which he belonged; and why should he not plunder them? By force if he could: but, where that was out of the question, why should he not take the same credit for an undetected theft that the Spartan gloried in taking?[2] To be detected was both shame and loss; but he was certainly entitled to any glory which might seem to settle upon success, not at all less than the more insolent and conceited savage of Grecian Sparta. Besides all which, amongst us civilised men the rule obtains universally —that the state and duties of peace are to be presumed until war is proclaimed.[3] Whereas, amongst rude nations, war is

[1] The French have learned since then, by the bloody experience of 1830 and of 1848 in Paris, what is the fearful power of street and house firing.

[2] It is singular that this Spartan glory from non-detection exists in full blow amongst ourselves. The resurrectionist, or body-snatcher, is, or was, regarded as a public benefactor and an ally of science, if undetected; being detected, he was punished severely by the magistrate, and had to fly for his life from the mob.

[3] The public proclamation, with man civilised, first of all opens and inaugurates war. It is peace, until otherwise ordered. But with the savage logic is reversed; the very opposite case obtains: war is so entirely the natural state of man with man that it needs a special, resonant, and thundering contract to make it otherwise.

understood to be the rule—war, open or covert, until suspended by express contract. War is the natural state of things for all, except those who view themselves as brothers by natural affinity, by local neighbourhood, by common descent, or who make themselves brothers by artificial contracts. Peace needs a proclamation. Captain Cook, who overlooked all this, should have begun by arranging a solemn treaty with the savages amongst whom he meant to reside for any length of time. This would have prevented many an angry broil then, and since then : it would also have prevented his own tragical fate. Meantime the savage is calumniated and misrepresented, for want of being understood.

There is, however, amongst civilised nations a mode of piracy still tolerated, or which *was* tolerated in the last war, but is now ripe for extinction. It is that war of private men upon private men which goes on under the name of privateering. Great changes have taken place in our modes of thinking within the last twenty-five[1] years ; and the greatest change of all lies in the thoughtful spirit which we now bring to the investigation of all public questions. I have no doubt at all that, when next a war arises at sea, the whole system of privateering will be condemned by the public voice. And the next step after that will be to explode all war whatsoever, public or private, upon commerce. War will be conducted *by* belligerents and *upon* belligerents exclusively.[2] To imagine the extinction of war itself, in the present stage of human

[1] This, let me admonish the reader, was written about twelve years ago. [As it was written in 1839, and this note was appended in 1858, De Quincey ought to have said "about nineteen years ago."—M.]

[2] At a meeting of the Political Economy Club of London, at which I chanced to be present a good many years ago, the question that had been arranged for the usual after-dinner discussion by the members was whether in time of war it would not be better to exempt commerce and all private property at sea from war-risks. The late Lord Iddesleigh, then Sir Stafford Northcote, opened the question on the affirmative side ; and the chief speaker on the other side was Mr. John Stuart Mill. Mr. Mill began by saying that the company might be surprised that *he*, a Radical, should be found arguing for the retention of the traditional war-system in all its severity while a Conservative statesman argued for a mitigation of the system ; and the reason he gave was this peculiar one,—that, war being such a horrible thing in itself, the retention of its worst horrors might, by accumulating disgust with it, lead perhaps to its speedier extinction.—M.

advance, is, I fear, idle. Higher modes of civilisation, an earth more universally colonised, the *homo sapiens* of Linnæus more developed, and other improvements, must pave the way for *that*: but amongst the earliest of those improvements will be the abolition of war carried into quarters where the spirit of war never ought to penetrate. Privateering will be abolished. War, on a national scale, is often ennobling, and one great instrument of pioneering for civilisation; but war of private citizen upon his fellow in another land is always demoralising.

III. *Usury.*—This ancient subject of casuistry I place next to *piracy*, for a significant reason: the two practices have both changed their public reputation as civilisation has advanced, but inversely—they have exactly interchanged their places. Beginning in honour, piracy has ended in infamy: and at this moment it happens to be the sole offence against society in which *all* the accomplices, without pity or intercession, let them be ever so numerous, are punished capitally. Elsewhere we decimate, or even centesimate: here we are all children of Rhadamanthus. Usury, on the other hand, beginning in utter infamy, has travelled upwards into considerable esteem; and Mr. "10 *per shent*" stands a very fair chance of being pricked for sheriff next year, and, in one generation more, of passing for a great patriot. Charles Lamb complained that, by gradual changes, not on his part, but in the spirit of refinement, he found himself growing insensibly into "an indecent character." The same changes which carry some downwards carry others up; and Shylock himself will soon be viewed as an eminent martyr or confessor for the truth as it is in the Alley. Seriously, however, there is nothing more remarkable in the history of casuistical ethics than the utter revolution in human estimates of usury. In this one point the Hebrew legislator agreed with the Roman—Deuteronomy with the Twelve Tables. Cicero mentions that the elder Cato, being questioned on various actions, and how he ranked them in his esteem, was at length asked, *Quid fœnerari?*—how did he rank usury? His indignant answer was by a retorted question, *Quid hominem occidere?*—what do I think of murder? In this particular case, as in some others, we must

allow that our worthy ancestors and forerunners upon this terraqueous planet were enormous blockheads. And their "exquisite reason" for this opinion on usury was quite worthy of Sir Andrew Aguecheek:—"Money," they argued, "could not breed money: one guinea was neither father nor mother to another guinea: and where could be the justice of making a man pay for the use of a thing some supposed equivalent which that thing could never produce?" But, venerable blockheads, that argument applies to the case of him who locks up his borrowed guinea. Suppose him *not* to lock it up, but to buy a hen, and the hen to lay a dozen eggs; one of those eggs will be so much per cent; and the thing borrowed has then produced its own *fœnus*. A still greater inconsistency was this:—Our ancestors would have rejoined that many people did not borrow in order to produce (*i.e.* to use the money as capital), but in order to spend (*i.e.* to use it as income). In that case, at least, the borrowers must derive the *fœnus* from some other fund than the thing borrowed; for, by the supposition, the thing borrowed has been spent. True; but on the same principle these ancestors ought to have forbidden every man to sell any article whatsoever to him who paid for it out of other funds than those produced by the article sold. Mere logical consistency required this: it happens, indeed, to be impossible; but that only argues their entire non-comprehension of their own doctrines.

The whole history of usury teems with instruction: 1st, comes the monstrous absurdity in which the proscription of usury anchored; 2dly, the absolute compulsion and downright unevadable pressure of realities in forcing men into a timid abandonment of their own ridiculous doctrines; 3dly, the unconquerable power of sympathy, which humbled all minds to one level, and forced the strongest no less than the feeblest intellects into the same infatuation of stupidity. The casuistry of ancient moralists on this question, especially of the scholastic moralists, such as Suarez, &c.—the oscillations by which they alternately relaxed and tied up the law, just as their erring conscience or the necessities of social life happened alternately to prevail—would compose one of the most interesting chapters in this science. But the Jewish re-

laxation is the most amusing: it coincides altogether with the theory of savages as to property, as a thing made sacred from robbery only by a special treaty. All men on earth, except Jews, were held to be fair subjects for usury; not as though usury were a just or humane practice: no—it was a belligerent practice: but then all foreigners in the Jewish eye were enemies, for the same reason that the elder Romans had one common term for an enemy and a stranger. And it is probable that many Jews at this day, in exercising usury, conceive themselves to be seriously making war, in a privateering fashion, upon Christendom, and practising reprisals on the Gentiles for the capture of Jerusalem by Titus.

IV. *Bishop Gibson's*[1] *Chronicon Preciosum.*—Many people are aware that this book is a record of prices, so far as they were recoverable, pursued through six centuries of English history. But they are not aware that this whole inqury is simply the machinery for determining a casuistical question. The question was this:—An English college—but I cannot at this moment say in which of our universities—had been founded in the reign of Henry VI, and between 1440 and 1460; probably it might be King's College, Cambridge.[2] Now, the statutes of this college, whatever be its name, make it imperative upon every candidate for a fellowship to swear that he does not possess an estate in land of inheritance, nor a perpetual pension, amounting to *five pounds per annum.* It is certain, however, that the founder did not mean superstitiously so much gold or silver as made *nominally* the sum of five pounds, but so much as virtually represented the five pounds of Henry VI's time—so much as would buy the same quantity of ordinary comforts. Upon this, therefore, arose two questions for the casuist:—(1.) What sum did substantially represent in 1706 (the year of publishing the "Chron. Preciosum") that nominal £5 of 1440? (2.) Supposing this ascertained, might a man with safe conscience retain his fellowship by swearing that he had not £5 a-year,

[1] Edmund Gibson, born 1669, died 1748 (bishop successively of Lincoln and London), a voluminous historical writer and antiquarian. —M.

[2] Eton, which everybody knows from Gray's "Ode" to have been certainly founded by Henry VI, is in close connexion with King's College.

when perhaps he had £20, provided that £20 were proved to be less in efficacy than the £5 of the elder period? Verbally this was perjury: was it such in virtue, and for the responsibilities of the conscience?

The Chronicle is not, as by its title the reader might suppose, a large folio: on the contrary, it is a small octavo of less than 200 pages. But it is exceedingly interesting, very ably reasoned, and as circumstantial in its illustrations as the good bishop's opportunities allowed him to make it. In one thing he was more liberal than Sir William Petty, Dr. Davenant, &c., or any elder economists of the preceding generation; he would have statistics treated as a classical or scholar-like study; and he shows a most laudable curiosity in all the questions arising out of his main one. His answer to *that* is as follows: 1. That £5 in Henry VI's time contained forty ounces of silver, whereas in Queen Anne's it contained only nineteen ounces and one-third; so that, in reality, the £5 of 1440 was, even formally, as to weight of silver, without needing to plead its virtuality, rather more than £10 of 1706. 2. As to the efficacy of £10 in Henry VI's reign: upon reviewing the main items of common household (and therefore of common academic) expenditure, and pursuing this review through bad years and good years, the bishop decides that it is about equal to £25 or £30 of Queen Anne's reign. Sir George Shuckburgh has since treated this casuistical problem more elaborately (see the "London Philosophical Transactions"); but Bishop Gibson it was who, in his "Chronicon Preciosum," first broke the ice.

After this, he adds an ingenious question upon the apparently parallel case of a freeholder swearing himself worth 40s. per annum as a qualification for an electoral vote: ought not he to hold himself perjured in voting upon an estate often so much below the original 40s. contemplated by Parliament, for the very same reason[1] that a collegian is *not* perjured in holding a fellowship, whilst, in fact, he may have four or five times the nominal sum privileged by the founder?

[1] "*For the very same reason*":—The reader may fail to see this. Let him consider that the point of conscience is exactly reversed for the two men: for the college man it is to prove his poverty, for the freeholder to prove his wealth.

The bishop says *no* ; and he distinguishes the case thus : the college £5 must always mean a virtual £5—a £5 in efficacy, and not merely in name. But the freeholder's 40s. is not so restricted ; and for the following reason—that this sum is constantly coming under the review of Parliament. It is clear, therefore, from the fact of not having altered it, that Parliament is satisfied with a merely nominal 40s., and sees no reason to alter it. True, it was a rule enacted by the Parliament of 1430 ; at which time 40s. was even in weight of silver equal to 80s. of 1706 ; and in virtue or power of purchasing equal to £12 at the least. The qualification of a freeholder was, therefore, much lower in Queen Anne's days than in those of Henry VI. But what of that ? Parliament, it must be presumed, sees good reason why it *should* be lower. And, at all events, till the law operates injuriously, there can be no reason to alter it.

A case of the same kind with those argued by Bishop Gibson has oftentimes arisen in trials of larceny—I mean in construing that enactment which fixed the minimum for a capital offence. This case is noticed by the bishop ; and juries of late years habitually took the casuistry into their own hands. They were generally held to act with no more than a proper humanity to the prisoner ; but still people thought such juries, in the extreme rigour of ethics, incorrect. Whereas, if Bishop Gibson is right, who allows a man to swear positively that he has not £5 a-year when nominally he has much more, such juries were even technically right. However, this point is now, by Sir Robert Peel's reforms, adjusted in conformity to the equities of the case, and so as to meet the noble sensibilities of juries more thoughtful, and the Christian scruples of those who are jealous not only of human life, but of human suffering in every degree. But there are other cases, and especially those which arise, not between different times, but between different places, which will often require the same kind of casuistry as that which is so ably applied by the good and learned bishop.[1]

[1] The following paragraph in De Quincey's preface in 1858 to the volume of his Collective Works which contains the reprint of his paper on Casuistry may come in here properly as a footnote, inasmuch

V. *Suicide.*—It seems passing strange that the main argument upon which Pagan moralists relied in their unconditional condemnation of suicide — viz. the supposed analogy of our situation in life to that of a sentinel mounting guard, who cannot, without a capital offence, quit his station until called off by his commanding officer—is dismissed with contempt by a Christian moralist—viz. Paley. But a stranger thing still is that the only man who ever wrote a book in palliation of suicide should have been not only a Christian, not only an official minister and dignitary of a metropolitan Christian church, but also a scrupulously pious man. I allude, as the reader will suppose, to Dr. Donne, Dean of St. Paul's, one of the subtlest intellects that England has produced.[1] His opinion is worthy of solemn consideration. Not that I myself would willingly diminish,

as it does not concern the paper as a whole, but only this particular portion of it :—"In speaking of the equation between the expenditure "of a family in two remote times, or two remote places (as France "and England) on the suggestion of the *Chronicon Preciosum*, I "omitted to fix the reader's attention (as properly I should have done) "upon a common oversight affecting such equations : viz. that very "often a large share of the difference forms no exponent of the mere "price scale ruling in the two countries compared ; since much of the "difference should be often charged upon varying usages of life. For "instance, about twenty-five years ago [about 1833] I saw a letter "from a poor baronet, who had fixed his residence in Southern "France, vaunting the prodigious cheapness of his own neighbourhood "by comparison with any part of Great Britain. He had a large "family of daughters, and an income of very little more than £500 "per annum ; and yet he described himself as keeping (and ordinarily "using for the benefit of his five daughters) a coach-and-four. But, "on further explanation, it came out that the usage of that province "allowed him a large social intercourse without the cost of dinner-"parties. Otherwise, in several points, England was the cheaper "land. To A, therefore, on a review of all the circumstances, per-"sonal as well as local, France might be much the cheaper ; to B, "with very different habits, or a household very differently composed, "England."—M.

[1] John Donne, D.D., poet and theologian, born 1573, died 1631. The particular work of Donne referred to is his "*Biathanatos : A Declaration of that Paradox or Thesis, that Self-Homicide is not so naturally Sin that it may not be otherwise.*" It was a posthumous publication in London in 1644 ; but Anthony Wood certifies (Ath. Oxon., ii. 503 of Bliss's Edition) that he had seen the original in Donne's hand in the Bodleian.—M.

by one hair's weight, the reasons against suicide ; but it is never well to rely upon ignorance or inconsideration for the defence of any principle whatever. Donne's notion was (a notion, however, adopted in his earlier years) that, as we do not instantly pronounce a man a murderer upon hearing that he has killed a fellow-creature, but, according to the circumstances of the case, pronounce his act either murder, or manslaughter, or justifiable homicide, so, by parity of reason, suicide is open to distinctions of the same or corresponding kinds : that there may be such a thing as self-homicide not less than self-murder, culpable self-homicide, and justifiable self-homicide. Donne called his Essay by the Greek name *Biathanatos*,[1] meaning *violent death*. But a thing equally strange, and a blasphemy almost unaccountable, is the fancy of a Prussian or Saxon baron, who wrote a book to prove that Christ committed suicide : for which he had no other argument than this,—that, in fact, Christ had surrendered himself unresistingly into the hands of his enemies, and had in a manner wilfully provoked his own death. This, however, describes the case of every martyr that ever was or can be. It is the very merit and grandeur of the martyr that he proclaims the truth with his eyes open to the consequences of proclaiming it. Those consequences are connected with the truth, but not by a natural link : the connexion is by means of false views, which it is the very business of the martyr to destroy. And, if a man founds my death upon

[1] This word, however, which occurs nowhere, that I remember, except in Lampridius, one of the Augustan historians, is there applied to Heliogabalus, and means, not the act of suicide, but a suicidal person. And possibly Donne, who was a good scholar, may so mean it to be understood in his title-page. Heliogabalus, says Lampridius, had been told by the Syrian priests that he should be *biathanatos*—*i.e.* should commit suicide. He provided, therefore, ropes of purple and of gold intertwisted, that he might hang himself imperatorially. He provided golden swords, that he might run himself through as became Cæsar. He had poisons enclosed in jewels, that he might drink his farewell heel-taps, if drink he must, in a princely style. Other modes of august death he had prepared. Unfortunately all were unavailing ; for he was murdered, and dragged through the common sewers by ropes without either purple or gold in their base composition. The poor fellow has been sadly abused in history ; but, after all, he was a mere boy, and as mad as a March hare.

an act which my conscience enjoins, even though I am aware and fully warned that he will found my death upon it, I am not, therefore, guilty of suicide. For, by the supposition, I was obliged to the act in question by the highest of all obligations—viz. moral obligation—which far transcends all physical obligation; so that, whatever excuse attaches to a physical necessity, attaches, *a fortiori*, to the moral necessity. The case is, therefore, precisely the same as if he had said, "I will put you to death if the frost benumbs your feet." The answer is, "I cannot help this effect of frost." Far less can I help revealing a celestial truth. I have no power, no liberty, to forbear. When a wing of an army persists in regression exactly as its antagonist endeavours to force it into action, and still wheels away, turning upon the centre as a pivot, it is technically said to *refuse* itself. To a kindling enthusiasm for a truth simply great by its effects a man may often refuse himself. But, if the truth is doubly great—great by its origin, great by its tendency—sometimes it will not submit to be refused. And, in killing me, he punishes me for a mere necessity of my situation and of my secret knowledge.

It is urged that brutes never commit suicide—except, indeed, the salamander, who has been suspected of loose principles in this point, but suspected merely under an old traditional conceit, founded in misinterpretation of equivocal appearances; and I myself know a man who constantly affirmed that a horse of his had committed suicide by violently throwing himself from the summit of a precipice. "But why," as I still asked him—"why should the horse have committed felony on himself? Were oats rising in the market?—or was he in love?—or vexed by politics?—or could a horse, and a young one rising four, be supposed to suffer from *tædium vitæ*?"[1] Meantime, as respects the general question of brute suicides, two points must be

[1] I have since known other cases of the same class. But all alike were chargeable upon the precipice. There are instances on record of hounds in nearly an entire pack being carried headlong over a precipice in perhaps the mere moral enthusiasm of hostile pursuit. But the horses (all young) went over under mere ignorance of the ground, and consequent *physical* inability to check their own impetus.

regarded :—1, that brutes are cut off from the vast world of moral and imaginative sufferings entailed upon man ; 2, that this very immunity presupposes another immunity,

"A cool suspense from pleasure and from pain,"

in the far coarser and less irritable animal organisation which must be the basis of an insulated physical sensibility. By *insulated* I mean, not extended through the unlimited propagation of *sympathy*. Brutes can neither suffer from intellectual passions, nor even, as I imagine, from very complex derangements of the nervous system ; so that in them the motives to suicide, the temptations to suicide, are prodigiously diminished. Nor are they ever alive to "the sublime attractions of the grave." It is, however, a humiliating reflection that, if any brutes can feel such aspirations, it must be those which are under the care of man. Doubtless the happiness of brutes is sometimes extended by men ; but also, too palpably, their misery.

Why suicide is not noticed in the New Testament is a problem yet open to the profound investigator.

VI. *Duelling.*—No one case in the vast volume of casuistry is so difficult to treat with justice and reasonable adaptation to the spirit of modern times as this of duelling. For, as to those who reason all upon one side, and never hearken in good faith to objections or difficulties, such people convince nobody but those who were already convinced before they began. At present (1839) society has for some years been taking a lurch to one side *against* duelling ; but inevitably a reaction will succeed ; for, after all, be it as much opposed as it may to Christianity, duelling performed such important functions in society as now constituted—I mean through the sense of instant personal accountability which it diffused universally amongst gentlemen, and all who have much sensibility to the point of honour—that, for one life which it took away as an occasional sacrifice, it saved myriads from outrage and affronts—millions from the anxiety attached to inferior bodily strength. However, it is no part of my present purpose to plead the cause of duelling, though pleaded it must be, more fairly

than it ever has been, before any progress will be made in suppressing it.[1]

But the point which I wish to notice at present is the universal blunder in treating this subject of duels about the Romans and Greeks. They, it is alleged, fought no duels; and occasion is thence taken to make very disadvantageous reflections upon us, the men of this Christian era, who, in defiance of our greater light, *do* fight duels, or at least *did* so. Lord Bacon himself is duped by this enormous blunder, and founds upon it a long speech in the Star-Chamber.

Now, in the first place, who does not see that, if the Pagans really *were* enabled by their religion to master their movements of personal anger and hatred, the inevitable inference will be to the huge disadvantage of Christianity? It would be a clear case. Christianity and Paganism have been separately tried as means of self-control: Christianity has flagrantly failed; Paganism succeeded universally; not having been found unequal to the task in any one known instance.

Oh, reader! these are gross falsehoods. A profounder error never existed. No religious influence whatever restrained the Greek or the Roman from fighting a duel. It was purely a civic influence, and it was sustained by this remarkable usage—in itself a standing opprobrium to both Greek and Roman—viz. the unlimited licence of tongue allowed to anger in the ancient assemblies and senates. This liberty of foul language, this perfect licence to Billingsgate in its utmost extravagance, operated in two ways:—1. Being universal, it took away all ground for feeling the words of an antagonist as any personal insult; so the offended man had rarely a motive for a duel. 2. The anger was thus less acute; yet, if it *were* acute, then this Billingsgate resource furnished an instantaneous valve for expectorating the wrath. Look, for example, at Cicero's orations against Mark Antony, or against Catiline, or against Piso. This last person was a senator of the very highest rank,

[1] For De Quincey's views on Duelling more at large, see the chapter of his *London Reminiscences* printed *ante*, Vol. III, pp. 160-196, under the title "Story of a Libel, with Thoughts on Duelling." —M.

family, connexions; yet, in the course of a few pages, does Cicero, a man of letters, polished to the extreme standard of Rome, address him by the elegant appellations of "filth," "mud," "carrion" (*projectum cadaver*). How could Piso have complained? It would have been said, "Oh, there's an end of republican simplicity if plain speaking is to be put down." And then it would have been added invidiously, "Better men than ever stood in *your* shoes have borne worse language. Will *you* complain of what was tolerated by Africanus, by Paulus Æmilius, by Marius, by Sylla?" Who could reply to that? And why should Piso have even wished to *call out* his foul-mouthed antagonist? On the contrary, a far more genial revenge awaited him than any sword could have furnished. Pass but an hour, and you will hear Piso speaking; it will then be *his* turn—every dog has his day; Piso will lay the lash into the scurrilous dog; and, though not quite so eloquent as his malignant enemy, he is yet eloquent enough for revenge; or, if he runs short, he can borrow from Tully what will meet the necessities of the moment; he is eloquent enough to call Cicero "filth," "mud," "carrion."

No; the reason of our modern duelling lay deeper than all that; it lies in the principle of *honour*—a direct product of chivalry—as that was in part a product of Christianity. The sense of honour did not exist in Pagan times. Bare natural equity, and the municipal laws—those were the two moral forces under which men acted. Honour applies to cases where both those forces are silent. And precisely because the ancients had no such sense, and because their revenge emptied itself by the basest of vomitories—viz. foul speaking and licence of tongue—was it that the Greeks and Romans had no duelling. It was no glory to them that they had not, but the foulest blot on their moral grandeur.

Part II

"Celebrare domestica facta."—Hor.

In a former notice of Casuistry I touched on such cases only as were of public bearings, or such as (if private) were

of rare occurrence and of a tragical standard. But ordinary life, in its most domestic paths, teems with cases of difficult decision; or, if not always difficult in the decision of the abstract question at issue, difficult in the accommodation of that decision to immediate practice. A few of these more homely cases, intermixed with more public ones, I will now select and review; for, according to a remark in my first paper, exactly as social economy grows more elaborate does the demand sympathetically strengthen for such circumstantial morality. As man advances, casuistry advances. Principles are the same; but the abstraction of principles from accidents and circumstances becomes a work of more effort. Aristotle in his "Nicomachean Ethics" has not one case; Cicero, three hundred years after, has a few; Paley, eighteen hundred years after Cicero, has many. Seneca, I think, has a few more than Cicero. In particular, he it was that first of all introduced for public discussion the very trying and afflicting collision between your private duties to a man who in past times has done you many eminent services and your public duties of hostility against that same man considered as a traitor to the state. Such a case is in itself a proof and an exemplification of a remark which I made just now — viz. that "*as man advances, casuistry advances.*"

There is also something in place as well as in time—in the people as well as the century — which determines the amount of interest in casuistry. I once heard an eminent person delivering it as an opinion, derived from a good deal of personal experience, *that of all European nations the British was that which suffered most from remorse;* and that, if internal struggles during temptation, or sufferings of mind after yielding to temptation, were of a nature to be measured upon a scale, or could express themselves sensibly to human knowledge, the annual report from Great Britain, its annual balance-sheet, by comparison with those from continental Europe, would show a large excess. At the time of hearing this remarkable opinion I, the hearer, was young, and I had little other ground for assent or dissent than such general impressions of national differences as I might happen to have gathered from the several literatures of Christian nations.

These were of a nature to confirm the stranger's verdict; but these were not sufficient. Since then, I have had occasion to think closely on that question. I have had occasion to review the public records of Christendom; and, beyond all doubt, the public conscience, the international conscience, of a people is the reverberation of its private conscience. History is but the converging into a focus of what is moving in the domestic life below,—a set of great circles expressing and summing up, on a representative dial-plate, the motions of many little circles in the machinery within. Now, History, what may be called the Comparative History of Modern Europe, countersigns the traveller's opinion.

"So, then," says a foreigner, or an Englishman with foreign sympathies, an Englishman who has undergone a French mercurial salivation, and has imported (as the one great result of a continental training) the brilliant art of shrugging his shoulders—"so, then, the upshot and amount of this doctrine is, that England is more moral than other nations." "Well," I answer, "and what of that?" Observe, however, that the doctrine went no further than as to conscientiousness; the principle out of which comes sorrow for all violation of duty, out of which comes a high standard of duty. Meantime both the "sorrow" and the "high standard" are very compatible with a lax performance. So that there was no such ostentatious pretension advanced as my opponents represent. But, suppose that I *had* gone as far as the objector supposes, and had ascribed a moral superiority every way to England, what is there in *that* to shock probability—whether the general probability from analogy, or the special probability from the circumstances of this particular case? We all know that there is no general improbability in supposing one nation, or one race, to outrun another. The modern Italians have excelled all nations in musical sensibility, and in genius for painting. They have produced the largest quantity of good music. And four of their supreme painters have perhaps not been approached hitherto by the painters of *any* nation. That facial structure, again, which is called the Caucasian, and which, through the ancient Greeks, has travelled westward to the nations of Christendom, and through *them* (chiefly through

the British) has become the transatlantic face, is, past all disputing, the finest type of the "human face divine" on this planet. And most other nations, Asiatic or African, have hitherto put up with this insult; except, indeed, the Kalmuck Tartars, who are highly indignant at our European vanity in this matter; and some of them, says Bergmann, the German traveller,[1] absolutely howl with rage, whilst others only laugh hysterically, at any man's having the insanity to prefer the Grecian features to the Kalmuck. Again, amongst the old Pagan nations, the Romans seem to have had "the call" for going ahead; and they fulfilled their destiny in spite of all that the rest of the world could do to prevent them. So that, far from being an improbable or unreasonable assumption, superiority (of one kind or other) has been the prevailing tendency of this and that nation at all periods of history.

Still less is the notion tenable of any special improbability applying to this particular pretension. For centuries has England enjoyed—1, civil liberty, 2, the Protestant faith. Now, in those two advantages are laid the grounds and the presumptive arguments for a superior morality. But watch now the inconsistency of men: ask any one of these men who dispute this English pretension *mordicus*[2]; ask him, or bid an Austrian serf ask him, what are the benefits of Protestantism, and what the benefits of liberty, that he should risk anything to obtain either. Hear how eloquently he insists upon their beneficial results, severally and jointly; and notice that he places foremost among those results a pure morality. Is he wrong? No: the man speaks bare truth. But what brute oblivion he manifests of his own doctrine, in taxing with arrogance any people for claiming one of those results *in esse* which he himself could see so clearly, and postulate so fiercely, *in posse*! Talk no more of freedom, or of pure religion, as fountains of a moral pre-eminence, if those who have possessed them in combination for the longest space of time may not, without arrogance, claim the vanward place amongst the nations of Europe.

So far as to the presumptions, general or special, so far as

[1] For Bergmann, see *ante*, Vol. VII, p. 9.—M.
[2] *i.e.* bitingly, snappishly, obstinately.—M.

to the probabilities, analogous or direct, in countenance of this British claim. Finally, when we come to the proofs from fact and historical experience, we might appeal to a singular case in the records of our Exchequer: viz. that for much more than a century back our "Gazette" and other public advertisers have acknowledged a series of anonymous remittances from those who, at some time or other, had appropriated public money. I understand that no corresponding fact can be cited from foreign records, or was ever heard of on the Continent. Now, this is a direct instance of that compunction which our travelled friend insisted on. But I choose rather to throw myself upon the general history of Great Britain, upon the spirit of her policy, domestic or foreign, and upon the notorious records of her public morality. Take the case of public debts, and the fulfilment of contracts to those who could not have compelled the fulfilment. We, we, we first set this precedent. All nations have now learned that honesty in such cases is eventually the best policy; but this they learned from our experience, and not till nearly all of them had tried the other policy. We it was who, under the most trying circumstances of war, maintained the sanctity from taxation of all foreign investments in our funds. Our conduct with regard to slaves, whether in the case of slavery or of the slave-trade—how prudent it may always have been we need not inquire; as to its moral principles, they went so far ahead of European standards that we were neither comprehended nor believed. The perfection of romance was ascribed to us by all who did not reproach us with the perfection of Jesuitical knavery. Finally, looking back to our dreadful conflicts with the three conquering despots of modern history, Philip II of Spain, Louis XIV, and Napoleon, we may incontestably boast of having been single in maintaining the general equities of Europe by war upon a colossal scale, and by our counsels in the general congresses of Christendom.

Such a review would amply justify the traveller's remarkable *dictum* upon the principle of remorse, and therefore of conscientiousness, as existing in greater strength amongst the people of Great Britain. On the same scale of proportions we may assume, in such a people, a keener sensibility to

moral distinctions ; more attention to shades of difference in the modes of action ; more anxiety as to the grounds of action. In the same proportions among the same people, we may assume a growing and more direct regard to casuistry ; which is precisely the part of ethics that will be continually expanding, and continually throwing up fresh questions. Not as though a moral principle could ever be essentially doubtful ; but that the growing complexity of *human* actions will make it more and more difficult in judgment to detach the principle from the circumstances, or, in practice, to determine the application of the principle to the facts. It will happen, therefore, as Coleridge used to say happened in all cases of importance, that extremes meet : for casuistical ethics will be most consulted by two classes the most opposite to each other—by those who seek excuses for evading their duties, and by those who seek a special fulness of light for fulfilling them.

Case I.—Health

Strange it is that moral treatises, when professing to lay open the great edifice of human duties, and to expose its very foundations, should not have begun with,—nay, should not have noticed at all,—those duties which a man owes to himself ; and, foremost amongst them, the duty of cultivating his own health. For it is evident that, from mere neglect of that one personal interest, which is at once a duty and a right, with the very best intentions possible, all other duties whatever may languish, or even become impossible ; for good intentions exist in all stages of efficiency, from the fugitive impulse to the realising self-determination. In this life the elementary blessing is health. What ! do I presume to place it before peace of mind ? Far from it ; but I speak of the *genesis* ; of the succession in which all blessings descend ; not as to time, but the order of dependency. All morality implies free agency ; it presumes beyond all other conditions an agent who is in perfect possession of his own volitions. Now, it is certain that a man without health is not uniformly master of his own purposes. He is not always, and in an

absolute sense, a free agent. Often he cannot be said either to be *in* the path of duty or *out* of it; so incoherent are the actions of a man forced back continually from the objects of his intellect and choice upon some alien objects dictated by internal wretchedness. It is true that, by possibility, some derangements of the human system are not incompatible with happiness; and a celebrated German author of the last century, Von Hardenberg—better known by his assumed name of Novalis—maintained, that certain modes of ill health, or valetudinarianism, were pre-requisites towards certain modes of intellectual development. He drew this refinement from his own case. But the ill health to which he pointed could not have gone beyond a luxurious indisposition; nor the corresponding intellectual purposes have been other than narrow, fleeting, and anomalous. Inflammatory action, in its early stages, is sometimes connected with voluptuous sensations; so is the preternatural stimulation of the liver. But these states, as pleasurable states, are transitory. All fixed derangements of the health are doubly hostile to the moral energies: first, through the intellect, which they debilitate unconsciously in many ways; and, next, both consciously and semi-consciously, through the will. The judgment is, perhaps, too clouded to fix upon a right purpose; the will too enfeebled to pursue it.

Two general remarks may be applied to all interferences of the physical with the moral sanity:—1. That it is not so much by absolute subtractions of time that ill health operates upon the serviceableness of a man as by its lingering effects upon his temper and his animal spirits. Many a man has not lost one hour of his life from illness whose faculties of usefulness have been most seriously impaired through gloom or untuned feelings. 2. That it is not the direct and known risks to our health which act with the most fatal effects, but the semi-conscious condition, the atmosphere of circumstances, with which artificial life surrounds us. The great cities of Europe, perhaps London beyond all others, under the modern modes of life and business, create a vortex of preternatural tumult, a rush and frenzy of excitement, which is fatal to far more than are ever heard of as express victims to that system.

The late Lord Londonderry's[1] nervous seizure was no solitary or rare case. So much I happen to know. I am well assured by medical men of great London practice that the case is one of growing frequency. In Lord Londonderry it attracted notice for reasons of obvious personal interest, as well as for its tragical catastrophe. But the complaint, though one of modern growth, is well known, and comes forward under a most determinate type as to symptoms among the mercantile class. The original predisposition to it lies permanently in the condition of London life, especially as it exists for public men. But the immediate exciting cause, which fires the train always ready for explosion, is invariably some combination of perplexities and deadly anxieties, such as are continually gathering into dark clouds over the heads of great merchants; sometimes only teasing and molesting, sometimes menacing and alarming. These perplexities are generally moving in counteracting paths; some progressive, some retrograde. There lies a man's safety; moving on opposite tacks, these anxieties will not often be confluent. But at times it will happen that all meet at once; and then comes a shock such as no brain already predisposed by a London life is strong enough (but more truly let us say, coarse enough) to support.

Lord Londonderry's case was precisely of that order. He had been worried by a long session of Parliament, which adds the crowning irritation in the interruption of sleep. The nervous system, ploughed up by intense wear and tear, is denied the last resource of natural relief. In this crisis,

[1] This expression—late Lord Londonderry—now (1858) means the *third* lord, him that was Lord Stewart, having earned that earlier of his titles by the severe (almost the unexampled) service of watching the expenditure of the subsidy voted by Parliament to Sweden; which subsidy Bernadotte (the greatest rogue, "pure and simple," that even Gascony has ever turned out) anxiously tried to pocket, without doing the work that these wages represented. But Lord Stewart (then Sir Charles Stewart) watched the rogue, until he (the rogue) was obliged to sit down and cry. Lord Stewart, on the death of his brother, succeeded him in the title of Londonderry; and at present he (the third Lord Londonderry) is "the late Lord Londonderry." But when this was written, many years ago, the second Lord Londonderry, whom so many of us remember as Lord Castlereagh, and who committed suicide in 1822, was the late Lord Londonderry.

already perilous, a new tempest was called in—of all the most terrific—the tempest of anxiety; and from what source? Anxiety from fear is bad; from hope delayed is bad; but worst of all is anxiety from responsibility, in cases where disease or weakness makes a man feel that he is unequal to the burden. The diplomatic interests of the country had been repeatedly confided to Lord Londonderry; he had justified that confidence; and he had received affecting testimonies of the honour and gratitude due to such services. A very short time before his fatal seizure, he had occasion to pass through Birmingham; he stopped only for the purpose of changing horses; yet, in that brief interval, an expression of public enthusiasm, unpremeditated, but unanimous, had reached him; and it affected him the more because Lady Londonderry was with him. At a moment when all the gentlemen of the place were assembled on 'Change, close to his inn, he had witnessed the whole assembly—no mob, but the collective good sense of the place—by one impulse standing bareheaded in his presence: a tribute of disinterested homage which affected him powerfully, and which was well understood as offered to his foreign diplomacy. Under these circumstances, could he bear to transfer the business of future negotiation? Could he suffer to lapse into other hands, as a derelict, the consummation of that task which thus far he had so prosperously conducted? Was it in human nature to do so? He felt the same hectic of human passion which Lord Nelson had felt in the very gates of death, when some act of authority was thoughtlessly suggested as belonging rightfully to his successor—"Not whilst I live, Hardy; not whilst I live." Yet, in Lord Londonderry's case, it was indispensable, if he would not transfer the trust, that he should rally his energies instantly; for a new Congress was even then assembling. There was no delay open to him by the nature of the case; the call was—*Now*, *now*, my lord, just as you are, with those shattered nerves and that overworked brain, take charge of interests the most complex in Christendom; in fact, of interests which *are* those of total Christendom.

This struggle, between a nervous system too grievously shaken and the *instant* demand for energy seven times intensified was too much for any generous nature. A merely

ceremonial embassy might have fulfilled its mission even under these drawbacks; but not this embassy. Anxiety supervening upon nervous derangement was bad; anxiety through responsibility was worse; but, through a responsibility created by grateful confidence, anxiety was an appeal through the very pangs of martyrdom. No brain could stand such a siege. Lord Londonderry's gave way; and he fell with the tears of the generous, even where they might happen to differ from him greatly in politics.

Meantime, this case, belonging to a class generated by the furnace of a London life, was in some quarters well understood even then; *now*, it is generally known that, had remedies more potent and more active been applied, or had the sufferer been able to stand up under his torture until the cycle of the successive symptoms had begun to come round, he might have been saved. The treatment is now well understood; but even then it was understood by some physicians; amongst others by that Dr. Willis who had attended George III. In several similar cases overpowering doses had been given of opium, or of brandy; and usually a day or two had carried off the oppression of the brain by a tremendous reaction.

Amongst the Quakers (who may be regarded as a monastic people) anomalous forms of nervous derangement are developed; the secret principle of which turns not, as in these London cases, upon feelings too much called out by preternatural stimulation, but upon feelings too much repelled and driven in. Morbid suppression of deep sensibilities must lead to states of disease equally terrific, and possibly even less tractable; not so sudden and critical it may be, but more settled and gloomy. I speak not of any physical sensibilities, but of those which are purely moral—sensibilities to poetic emotions, to ambition, to social gaiety, or to impassioned and exalted love. Quaker philosophy takes notice of no possible emotions, however modified or ennobled, as more or other than as morbid symptoms of a morbid derangement. Accordingly, it is amongst the young men and women of this body that the most afflicting cases under this eccentric type occur. Even for children, however, the systematic repression of all ebullient feeling must be perilous; and would be more so, were it not for that marvellous flexibility by which nature adapts herself

to all changes—whether imposed by climate or by situation, by inflictions of Providence or by human spirit of system.

These cases I point to as formidable mementos—*monumenta sacra*—of those sudden catastrophes which either ignorance of what concerns the health, or neglect in the midst of knowledge, may produce. Any mode of life, in London or not in London, which trains the nerves to a state of permanent irritation prepares a *nidus* for disease ; and unhappily not for chronic disease only, but for disease of that acute order which finishes the struggle almost before it is begun. In such a state of habitual training for morbid action it has happened that one and the same week has seen the victim apparently well and in his grave.

These, indeed, are extreme cases, though still such as threaten many more than they actually strike ; for, though uncommon, they grow out of very common habits. But even the ordinary cases of unhealthy action in the system are sufficient to account for perhaps three-fourths of all the disquiet and bad temper which disfigure daily life. Not one man in every twenty-five is perfectly clear of some disorder, more or less, in the digestive system—not one man in fifty enjoys the absolutely normal state of that organ ; and upon that depends the daily cheerfulness, in the first place, and through that (as well as by more direct actions) the sanity of the judgment. To speak strictly, not one man in a hundred is perfectly sane even as to his mind. For, though the greater disturbances of the mind do not take place in more than one man of each thousand,[1] those slighter shades that settle on the judgment, which daily bring up molesting thoughts such as a man would gladly banish, thoughts imperiously irritating at the moment, and wearing to the animal spirits—these derangements are universal.

From the greater alike and the lesser no man can free himself but in the proportion of his available knowledge applied to his own animal system, and of the surrounding

[1] "*One man of each thousand*" :—In several nations that has been found to be the average proportion of the insane. But this calculation has never been made to include all the slighter cases. It is not impossible that at some periods the whole human race may have been partially insane.

circumstances, as constantly acting on that system. Would I, then, desire that every man should interrupt his proper studies or pursuits for the sake of superintending a medical discipline applied to his own case? Not at all: nor is that requisite. The laws of health are as simple as the elements of arithmetic or geometry. It is required only that a man should open his eyes, to perceive the great elementary forces which support health.

They are these: 1, the *blood* requires motion; 2, the great central organ of the *stomach* requires exercise and adaptation of diet; 3, the *nervous system* requires regularity of repose. In those three functions of sleep, diet, exercise, is contained the whole economy of health. All three, of course, act and react upon each other; and all three are wofully deranged by a London life—above all, by a Parliamentary life. As regards the first point, it is probable that any torpor, or even *lentor* in the blood, such as scarcely expresses itself sensibly through the pulse, renders that fluid less able to resist the first actions of disease. As to the second, a more complex subject, luckily we benefit not by our own brief experience exclusively; every man benefits practically by the traditional experience of ages, which constitutes the culinary experience in every land and every household. The inheritance of knowledge, which every generation receives, as to the salubrity of this or that article of diet, operates continually in preventing dishes from being brought to table. Every man wonders, on reading the long list of edible substances forbidden by the Mosaic law, how the ordinary Jew could find time to watch this long prohibitory tariff. But *that* was done for him by proxy. The butcher was bastinadoed who offered for sale any prohibited article. The buyer was therefore without anxiety. The same good office is performed for us all, Jews and Gentiles, by old traditional maxims embodied in immemorial usages. Each man's separate experience adds something to arm him against the temptation when it is offered; and, again, the traditional experience far oftener intercepts the temptation. As to the third head, *sleep*, this of all is the most immediately fitted by nature to the relief of the brain and its exquisite machinery of nerves: it is the function of health most attended to in our navy; and of all it is the one most painfully ravaged by a Parliamentary life.

It would seem, therefore, that the three central forces of health—viz. *motion*, *rest*, and *temperance* (or, by a more adequate expression, *adaptation to the organ*)—are, in a certain gross way, taught to every man by his personal experience. The difficulty is—as in so many other cases—not for the understanding, but for the will; not to know, but to execute.

Now, here steps in casuistry with two tremendous suggestions, sufficient to alarm any thoughtful man, and rouse him more effectually to the performance of his duty.

First, that under the same law (whatever that law may be) which makes (or which is generally thought to make) suicide a crime must the neglect of health be a crime. For thus stand the two accounts:—By suicide you have cut off a *portion unknown* from your life: years it may be, but possibly only days. By neglect of health you have cut off a *portion unknown* from your life: days it may be, but also by possibility years. So the practical result may be the same in either case; or, by possibility, the least is suicide. "Yes," you reply, "the *practical* results; but not the purpose—not the intention: *ergo*, not the crime." Certainly not: in the one case the result arises from absolute predetermination with the whole energies of the will; in the other, it arises *in spite* of your will (meaning your choice)—it arises out of human infirmity. But still the difference is as between choosing an act for its own sake and falling into it from strong temptation. I do not pretend to know whether, or in what extent, suicide may be a crime. All *that* is wrapped in clouds. But this is certain—that, in so far as it is criminal, habitual neglect of health must partake of that criminality.

Secondly, that in every case of duty unfulfilled, or duty imperfectly fulfilled, in consequence of illness, languor, decaying spirits, &c., there is a high probability (under the age of sixty-five almost a certainty) that a part of the obstacle is due to self-neglect. No man that lives but loses some of his time from ill health, or at least from the incipient forms of ill health—bad spirits, or indisposition to exertion. Now, taking men even as they are, statistical societies have ascertained that, from the ages of twenty to sixty-five, ill health, such as to interrupt daily labour, averages from seven

days to about fourteen per annum. In the *best* circumstances of climate, occupation, &c., one fifty-second part of the time perishes to the species—in the *least* favourable, two such parts. Consequently, in the forty-five years from twenty to sixty-five, not very far from a year perishes on an average to every man—to some very much more. A considerable part even of this loss is due to neglect or mismanagement of health. But this estimate records only the loss of time in a pecuniary sense ; which loss, being powerfully restrained by self-interest, will be the least possible under the circumstances. The loss of energy, as applied to duties not connected with any self-interest, or also as applied to the culture of happiness, will be far more. In so far as that loss emanates from defect of spirits, or other modes of vital torpor, such as neglect of health has either caused or promoted, and such as care might have prevented, in so far the omission is chargeable to our own responsibility, and is a modification of suicide more certainly criminal than that act of which it is the modification : because suicide *may* have, at any rate, one mode of palliation to plead (I do not even guess in what proportion of cases it *has* that plea) ; whereas wilful neglect of health never has it. Many men fancy that the slight injuries done by each single act of intemperance are like the glomeration [1] of

[1] "*Glomeration*" :—"Rather a pedantic word, I should imagine," says Mr. Snarl, critic-general for two parishes. No, Mr. Snarl : not at all pedantic, unless moonbeams are pedantic. Let me presume to point out, even to the Snarlian intellect, a beauty in Virgil (as also in other Latin poets) which hitherto has escaped notice. What does *glomerare* mean ? Not simply to *aggregate* or *coacervate* ; but to do this after a certain model or fashion. What fashion ? Why, what is it that you mean by a *glomus*, from which word the verb *glomero* is a derivative ? The English word for *glomus* was in elder days a *bottom* ; which term still survives in the old English of Lancashire and Yorkshire. And I believe that Shakspere alluded to this technical word in the mystery of *weaving* when he styled one of his characters in the "Midsummer Night's Dream" *Bottom the weaver*. The *glomus* was a little wooden implement ; of what exact shape I do not know ; but, when covered with worsted (or cotton, I presume), it presented a spiral circumvolution of the thread. Now, the aerial curvetings of a horse with his fore legs, the pawings which he describes in the air, exactly repeat the spiral windings of the thread upon the *glomus*. And thence it is that Virgil describes a fiery horse as attempting *gressus glomerare superbos*—to wind as it were his haughty curvetings round some imaginary *glomus* made out of air or moonshine.

moonbeams upon moonbeams—myriads will not amount to a positive value. Perhaps they are wrong; possibly every act—nay, every separate pulse or throb of intemperate sensation—is numbered in our own after-actions; reproduces itself in some future perplexity; comes back in some reversionary shape that injures the freedom of action for all men, and makes good men afflicted. At all events, it is an undeniable fact that many a case of difficulty, which in apology for ourselves we very truly plead to be insurmountable by our existing energies, has borrowed its sting from previous acts or omissions of our own; it might *not* have been insurmountable had we better cherished our physical resources. For instance, of such a man it is said that he did not assist in repelling an injury from his friend or his native land. "True," says his apologist, "but you would not require him to do so when he labours under paralysis?" "Certainly not; but perhaps he might *not* have laboured under paralysis had he uniformly practised abstinence."[1]

[1] With respect to the management of health,—although it is undoubtedly true that, like the "primal charities," in the language of Wordsworth, in proportion to its importance it shines alike for all, and is diffused universally,—yet not the less, in every age, some very obstinate prejudices have prevailed to darken the truth. Thus Dryden authorises the conceit that medicine can never be useful or requisite, because

"God never made his work for man to mend."

To mend! No, glorious John, neither physician nor patient has any such presumptuous fancy; we take medicine to mend the injuries produced by our own folly. What the medicine mends is not God's work, but our own. The medicine is a *plus* certainly; but it is a *plus* applied to a *minus* of our own introducing. Even in these days of practical knowledge, errors prevail on the subject of health which are neither trivial nor of narrow operation. Universally, the true theory of digestion, as partially unfolded in Dr. Wilson Philip's experiments on rabbits, is so far mistaken, and even inverted, that Lord Byron, when seeking a diet of easy digestion, instead of resorting to animal food broiled and underdone, which all medical men know to be the most digestible food, took to a vegetable diet, which requires a stomach of extra power. The same error is seen in the common notion about the breakfast of ladies in Elizabeth's days, as if fit only for ploughmen; whereas it is *our* breakfasts of slops which require the powerful organs of digestion. The same error, again, is current in the notion that a weak watery diet is fit for a weak person. Such a person peculiarly requires solid food. It is also a common mistake to suppose that,

Let not the reader suspect me of the Popish doctrine that men are to enter hereafter into a separate reckoning for each separate act. That reckoning, we Protestants believe, no man could stand, and that some other resource must be had than any personal merits of the individual. But still we should recollect that this doctrine, though providing a refuge for past offences, provides none for such offences as are committed deliberately, with a prospective view to the benefits of such a refuge. Offend we may, and we must; but then our offences must come out of mere infirmity—not because we calculate upon a large allowance being made to us, and say to ourselves, *We can do our penitence hereafter: at present let us take out our allowance.*

Casuistry, therefore, justly, and without infringing any truth of Christianity, urges the care of health as the basis of all moral action, because, in fact, of all *perfectly voluntary* action. Every impulse of bad health jars or untunes some string in the fine harp of human volition; and, because a man cannot be a moral being but in the proportion of his free agency, therefore it is clear that no man can be in a high sense moral, except in so far as through health he commands his bodily powers, and is not commanded by them.

Case II.—Laws of Hospitality in Collision with Civic Duties

Suppose the case that, taking shelter from a shower of rain in a stranger's house, you discover proofs of a connexion with smugglers. Take this for one pole of such case, the trivial extreme; then, for the other pole, the greater extreme, suppose the case that, being hospitably entertained, and happening to pass the night in a stranger's house, you are so unfortunate as to detect unquestionable proofs of some

because no absolute illness is caused by daily errors of diet, these errors are practically cancelled. Cowper the poet delivers the very just opinion that all disorders of a *function* (as, suppose, the secretion of bile), sooner or later, if not corrected, cease to be functional disorders, and become organic; that is, in plain English, beginning with injury to the mere *office* of any organ, they end by attacking its substance.

dreadful crime, say murder, perpetrated in past times by one of the family. The principle at issue is the same in both cases—viz. the command resting upon the conscience to forget private considerations and personal feelings in the presence of any solemn duty; yet merely the difference of degree, and not any at all in the kind of duty, would lead pretty generally to a separate practical decision for the several cases. In the last of the two, whatever might be the pain to a person's feelings, he would feel himself to have no discretion or choice left. Reveal he must; not only, if otherwise revealed, he must come forward as a witness, but, if not revealed, he must denounce—he must lodge an information, and that instantly; else even in law, without question of morality, he makes himself a party to the crime—an accomplice after the act. That single consideration would with most men at once cut short all deliberation. And yet, even in such a situation, there is a possible variety of the case that might alter its complexion. If the crime had been committed many years before, and under circumstances which precluded all fear that the same temptation or the same provocation should arise again, and with no lurking chance that an innocent person should fall under suspicion, most reflecting people would think it the better course to leave the criminal to his conscience. Often in such denunciations it is certain that human impertinence, and the spirit which sustains the habit of gossip, and mere incontinence of secrets, and vulgar craving for being the author of a sensation, have far more often led to the publication of the offence than any concern for the interests of morality.[1]

On the other hand, with respect to the slighter extreme —viz. in a case where the offence is entirely created by the law, with no natural turpitude about it, and besides (which is a strong argument in the case) enjoying no special facilities of escaping justice—no man in the circumstances supposed would have a reason for hesitating. The laws of hospitality are of everlasting obligation; they are equally binding on

[1] Most confessions in prison fall within this category. They are special luxuries to all parties, especially to the criminal, whose only vexation is that he cannot make ten confessions; since ever after he becomes a pet, and is regularly fattened up for the scaffold.

the host and on the guest. Coming under a man's roof for one moment, in the clear character of guest, creates an absolute sanctity in the consequent relations which connect the parties. That is the popular feeling. The king in the old ballads is always represented as feeling that it would be damnable to make a legal offence out of his own venison which he had eaten as a guest. There is a cleaving pollution, like that of the Syrian leprosy, in the act of abusing your privileges as a guest, or in any way profiting by your opportunities as a guest to the injury of your confiding host. Henry VII, though a prince, was no gentleman ; and in the famous case of his dining with Lord Oxford, and saying at his departure, with reference to an infraction of his recent statute, "My lord, I thank you for my good cheer, but my attorney must speak with you," Lord Oxford might have justly retorted, "If he does, then posterity will speak pretty plainly with your grace" ; for it was in the character of Lord Oxford's guest that he had learned the infraction of his law. Meantime, the general rule, and the *rationale* of the rule, in such cases, appears to be this : whenever there is, or can be imagined, a sanctity in the obligations on one side, and only a benefit of expediency in the obligations upon the other, the latter must give way. For the detection of smuggling (the particular offence supposed in the case stated) society has an express and separate machinery maintained. If their activity droops, that is the business of government. In such a case government is entitled to no aid from private citizens ; on the express understanding that no aid must be expected has so expensive an establishment been submitted to. Each individual refuses to participate in exposure of such offences, for the same reason that in some towns he refuses to keep the street clean even before his own door : he has already paid for having such work discharged by proxy.

Case III.—Giving Characters to Servants who have misconducted themselves

No case so constantly arises to perplex the conscience in private life as this,—which, in principle, is almost beyond

solution. Sometimes, indeed, the coarse realities of law step in to cut that Gordian knot which no man can untie; for it is an actionable offence in Great Britain to give a character wilfully false. That little fact at once exorcises all aerial phantoms of the conscience. True: but this coarse machinery applies only to those cases in which the servant has been guilty in a way amenable to law. In any case short of *that* no plaintiff would choose to face the risks of an action; nor could he sustain it; the defendant would always have a sufficient resource in the vagueness and large latitude allowed to opinion when estimating the qualities of a servant. Almost universally, therefore, the case comes back to the forum of conscience. Now, in that forum how stands the pleading? Too certainly, we will suppose, that the servant has not satisfied your reasonable expectations. This truth you would have no difficulty in declaring; here, as much as anywhere else, you would feel it unworthy of your own integrity to equivocate—you open your writing-desk, and sit down to tell the mere truth in as few words as possible. But then steps in the consideration that to do this without disguise or mitigation is oftentimes to sign a warrant for the ruin of a fellow-creature—and that fellow-creature possibly penitent, in any case thrown upon your mercy. Who can stand this? In lower walks of life it is true that mistresses often take servants without any certificate of character; but in higher grades this is notoriously uncommon, and in great cities dangerous. Besides, the candidate may happen to be a delicate girl, incapable of the hard labour incident to such a lower establishment. Here, then, is a case where conscience says into your left ear, *Fiat justitia, ruat cœlum*—"Do your duty and defy consequences." Meantime, into the right ear conscience says, "But mark, in that case possibly you consign this poor girl to prostitution." Lord Nelson, as is well known, was once placed in a dilemma [1] equally trying; on

[1] "*Once placed in a dilemma*":—On the first expedition against Copenhagen (in 1801). He was unfortunately second in command; his principal, a brave man in person, wanted moral courage—he could not face responsibility in a trying shape. And, had he not been blessed with a disobedient second in command, he must have returned home *re infecta*.

one side, an iron tongue sang out from the commander-in-chief (Sir Hyde Parker) *Retreat*; on the other, his own oracular heart sang to him *Advance*. How he decided is well known; and the words in which he proclaimed his decision ought to be emblazoned for ever as the noblest of all recorded repartees. Waving his hand towards the admiral's ship, he said to his own officers, who reported the signal of recall, "You may see it; I cannot; you know I am blind on that side."[1] Oh, venerable blindness! immortal blindness! None so deaf as those who will not hear; none so gloriously blind as those who will not see any danger or difficulty—who have a dark eye on that side, whilst they reserve another blazing like a meteor for honour and their country's interest. Most of us, I presume, in the case stated about the servant, hear but the whispering voice of conscience as regards the truth, and the thundering voice as regards the poor girl's interest. In doing this, however, we (and doubtless others) usually attempt to compromise the opposite suggestions of conscience by some such jesuitical device as this:—We dwell pointedly upon those good qualities which the servant really possesses, and evade speaking of any others. But how, if minute, searching, and circumstantial inquiries are made by way of letter? In that case, we affect to have noticed only such as we can answer satisfactorily, passing the dangerous ones, as so many rocks, *sub silentio*. All this is not quite right, you think, reader. Why, no; so think we; but what alternative is allowed? Say, ye severest, what would ye have done? In very truth, this is a dilemma for which casuistry is not a match; unless, indeed, casuistry as armed and equipped in the school of Ignatius Loyola. But that is with us reputed a piratical casuistry. The whole estate of a servant lies in his capacity of serving; and often, if you tell the truth, by one word you ruin this estate for ever. Meantime, a case very much of the same quality, and of even greater difficulty, is

[1] He had lost an eye; I forget whether at Teneriffe, or subsequently at Aboukir. [It was at neither, but at the siege of Calvi in 1794, three years before the first, and four before the second.—M.]

Case IV.—Criminal Prosecution of Fraudulent Servants

Any reader who is not deeply read in the economy of English life will have a most inadequate notion of the vast extent to which this case occurs. I am well assured (for my information comes from quarters *judicially* conversant with the question) that in no other channel of human life does there flow one-hundredth part of the forbearance and the lenity which are called into action by the relation between injured masters and their servants. I am informed that, were every third charge pursued effectually, half the courts in Europe would not suffice for the cases of criminality which emerge in London alone under this head. All England would, in the course of five revolving years, have passed under the torture of *subpœna*, as witnesses for the prosecution or the defence. This multiplication of cases arises from the coincidence of hourly opportunity with hourly temptation, both carried to the extreme verge of possibility, and generally falling in with youth in the offenders. These aggravations of the danger are three several palliations of the crime, and they have weight allowed to them by the indulgent feelings of masters in a corresponding degree; not one case out of six score that are discovered (while, perhaps, another six score go undiscovered) being ever prosecuted with rigour and effect.

In this universal laxity of temper lies an injury too serious to public morals; and the crime reproduces itself abundantly under an indulgence so Christian in its motive, but unfortunately operating with the full effect of genial culture. Masters who have made themselves notorious by indiscriminate forgiveness might be represented symbolically as gardeners watering and tending luxuriant crops of weeds or poisonous herbs in hot-beds or forcing-houses. In London, many are the tradesmen who, being reflective as well as benevolent, perceive that something is amiss in the whole system. In part the law has been to blame, stimulating false mercy by punishment disproportioned to the offence. But many a judicious master has seen cause to suspect his

own lenity as more mischievously operative even than the law's harshness, and as an effeminate surrender to luxurious sensibilities. Those have not been the severest masters whose names are attached to fatal prosecutions: on the contrary, three out of four have been persons who looked forward to general consequences—having, therefore, been more than usually thoughtful, were, for that reason, likely to be more than usually humane. They did not suffer the less acutely because their feelings ran counter to the course of what they believed to be their duty. Prosecutors often sleep with less tranquillity, during the progress of a judicial proceeding, than the objects of the prosecution. An English judge of the last century, celebrated for his uprightness, used to balance against that pity so much vaunted for the criminal the duty of "a pity to the country." But private prosecutors of their own servants often feel both modes of pity at the same moment.

For this difficulty a book of casuistry might suggest a variety of resources, not so much adapted to a case of that nature already existing as to the prevention of future cases. Every mode of trust or delegated duty would suggest its own separate improvements; but all improvements must fall under two general heads: first, the diminution of temptation, either by abridging the amount of trust reposed, or, where that is difficult, by shortening its duration and multiplying the counter-checks: secondly, by the moderation of the punishment in the event of detection, as the sole means of reconciling the public conscience to the law and diminishing the chances of impunity. There is a memorable proof of the rash extent to which the London tradesmen, at one time, carried their confidence in servants. So many clerks, or apprentices, were allowed to hold large balances of money in their hands through the intervals of their periodical settlings that during the Parliamentary War multitudes were tempted, by that single cause, into absconding. They had always a refuge in the camps. And the loss sustained in this way was so heavy, when all payments were made in gold, that to this one evil, suddenly assuming a shape of excess, is ascribed, by some writers, the first establishment of goldsmiths as bankers.[1]

[1] "*First establishment of goldsmiths as bankers*":—Goldsmiths

Two other weighty considerations attach to this head :— 1. The known fact that large breaches of trust and embezzlements are greatly on the increase, and have been since the memorable case of Mr. Fauntleroy.[1] America is, and will be for ages if the law of extradition should remain unchanged [*written* in 1846], a city of refuge for this form of guilt. 2. That the great training of the conscience in all which regards pecuniary justice and fidelity to engagements lies through the discipline and *tirocinium* of the humbler ministerial offices— those of clerks, book-keepers, apprentices. The law acts through these offices, for the unconfirmed conscience, as leading-strings to an infant in its earliest efforts at walking. It forces to go right, until the choice may be supposed trained and fully developed. That is the great function of the law,— a function which it will perform with more or less success as it is more or less fitted to win the cordial support of masters.

Case V.—Veracity

Here is a special "title" (to speak with the civil lawyers) under that general claim put in for England with respect to a moral pre-eminence amongst the nations. Many are they who, in regions widely apart, have noticed with honour the English superiority in the article of veneration for truth. Not many years ago, two Englishmen, on their road overland to India, fell in with a royal *cortége*, and soon after with the prime minister and the crown prince of Persia. The prince honoured them with an interview : both parties being on horseback, the conversation was therefore reduced to the points of nearest interest. Amongst these was the English character. Upon this the prince's remark was that what had most impressed him with respect for England and her institutions was the remarkable spirit of truth-speaking which distinguished her sons ; as supposing her institutions to grow out of her sons, and her sons out of her institutions. And,

certainly acted in that capacity from an earlier period. But from this era, until the formation of the Bank of England in 1696, they entered more fully upon the functions of bankers, issuing notes which passed current in London.

[1] Fauntleroy, London banker, hanged for forgery.—M.

indeed, well he might have this feeling by comparison with his own countrymen: Persians have no *principles* apparently on this point—all is impulse and accident of feeling. Thus the journal of the two Persian princes in London, as lately reported in the newspapers, is one tissue of falsehoods: not, most undoubtedly, from any purpose of deceiving, but from the overmastering habit (cherished by their whole training and experience) of repeating everything in a spirit of amplification, with a view to the *wonder* only of the hearer. The Persians are notoriously the Frenchmen of the East: the same gaiety, the same levity, the same want of depth both as to feeling and principle. The Turks are supposed to be much nearer to the English: the same gravity of temperament, the same meditativeness, the same sternness of principle. Of all European nations, the French is that which least regards truth. The whole spirit of their private memoirs and their anecdotes illustrates this. To point an anecdote or a repartee, there is no extravagance of falsehood that the French will not endure. What nation but the French would have tolerated that monstrous fiction about La Fontaine, by way of illustrating his supposed absence of mind—viz. that, on meeting his own son in a friend's house, he expressed his admiration of the young man, and begged to know his name. The fact probably may have been that La Fontaine was not liable to any absence at all: apparently this "distraction" was assumed, as a means of making a poor sort of sport for his friends. Like many another man in such circumstances, he saw with half an eye, and entered into the fun which his own imaginary forgetfulness produced. But, were it otherwise, who can believe so outrageous a self-forgetfulness as that which would darken his eyes to the very pictures of his own hearth? Were such a thing possible, were it even real, it would still be liable to the just objection of the critics—that, being incredible in appearance, even as a fact it ought not to be brought forward for any purpose of wit, but only as a truth of physiology, or as a fact from the records of a surgeon. The "*incredulus odi*" is too strong in such cases, and it adheres to three out of every four French anecdotes. The French taste is, indeed, anything but good in all that department of wit and humour. And the ground lies in

their national want of veracity. To return to England: and, having cited an oriental witness to the English character on this point, let me now cite a most observing one in the West. Kant, in Königsberg, was surrounded by Englishmen and by foreigners of all nations—foreign and English students, foreign and English merchants; and he pronounced the main characteristic feature of the English as a nation to lie in their severe reverence for truth. This from him was no slight praise; for such was the stress he laid upon veracity that upon this one quality he planted the whole edifice of moral excellence. General integrity could not exist, he held, without veracity as its basis; nor that basis exist without superinducing general integrity.

This opinion, perhaps, many beside Kant will see cause to approve. For myself, I can truly say, never did I know a human being, boy or girl, who began life as a habitual undervaluer of truth, that did not afterwards exhibit a character conformable to that beginning; such a character as, however superficially correct under the steadying hand of self-interest, was not in a lower key of moral feeling as well as of principle.

But out of this honourable regard to veracity in Immanuel Kant branched out a principle in casuistry which most people will pronounce monstrous. It has occasioned much disputing backwards and forwards. But, as a practical principle of conduct (for which Kant meant it), inevitably it must be rejected, if for no other reason than because it is at open war with the laws and jurisprudence of all Christian Europe. Kant's doctrine was this,—and the illustrative case in which it is involved, let it be remembered, is his own:—So sacred a thing, said he, is truth that, if a murderer, pursuing another with an avowed purpose of killing him, were to ask of a third person by what road the fugitive had fled, that person is bound to give him true information. And you are at liberty to suppose this third person a wife, a daughter, or under any conceivable obligations of love and duty to the fugitive. Now this is monstrous; and Kant himself, with all his parental fondness for the doctrine, would certainly have been recalled to sounder thoughts by these two considerations—

1. That, by all the codes of law received throughout

Europe, he who acted upon Kant's principle would be held a *particeps criminis*—an accomplice before the fact.

2. That, in reality, a just principle is lurking under Kant's paradox, but a principle translated from its proper ground. Not truth individual or personal, not truth of mere facts, but truth doctrinal—the truth which teaches, the truth which changes men and nations—this is the truth concerned in Kant's meaning, had he explained his own meaning to himself more distinctly. With respect to that truth, wheresoever it lies, Kant's doctrine applies,—that all men have a right to it; that perhaps you have no right to suppose of any race or nation that it is not capable of receiving it; and, at any rate, that no circumstances of expedience can justify you in keeping it back.[1]

Case VI.—The Case of Charles I.

Many cases arise from the life and political difficulties of Charles I. But there is one so peculiarly pertinent to an essay which entertains the general question of casuistry, its legitimacy, and its value, that with this, although not properly a domestic case, or only such in a mixed sense, I shall conclude.

No person has been so much attacked for his scruples of conscience as this prince; and, what seems odd enough, no person has been so much attacked for resorting to books of casuistry, and for encouraging literary men to write books of casuistry. Under his suggestion and sanction, Sanderson wrote his book on the obligation of an oath[2] (for which there was surely reason enough in days when the democratic tri-

[1] It is remarkable enough that Kant was once nearly illustrating his own imaginary case. A murderer pursued him for nearly three miles on the high-road with the design of operating; but, being a very religious man, on second thoughts, and in deference to a point of casuistry, he preferred murdering a little girl; and thus it happened that the transcendental philosopher escaped.

[2] Robert Sanderson, Royalist divine, born 1587, died 1662, when he was Bishop of Lincoln. The work of his referred to was *De Juramenti Promissorii Obligatione*, published at Oxford 1646. Charles I. valued it so much that he translated it into English with his own hand.—M.

bunals were forcing men to swear [1] to an *etcetera* [2]; and, by an impulse originally derived from *him*, Jeremy Taylor wrote his "Ductor Dubitantium" (*i.e.* "Guide to the Scrupulous [3]"), Bishop Barlow his "Cases of Conscience [4]", &c.

For this dedication of his studies Charles has been plentifully blamed in after times. He was seeking evasions for plain duties, say his enemies. He was arming himself for intrigue in the spirit of Machiavel. But now turn to his history, and ask in what way any man could have extricated himself from that labyrinth which invested his path *but* by casuistry. Cases the most difficult are offered for his decision: peace for a distracted nation in 1647, on terms which seemed fatal to the monarchy; peace for the same nation under the prospect of war rising up again during the Isle of Wight treaty in 1648, but also under the certainty of destroying the Church of England. On the one side, by refusing, he seemed to disown his duties as the father of his people. On the other side, by yielding, he seemed to forget his coronation oath, and the ultimate interests of his people; to merge the future and the reversionary in the present and the fugitive. It was not within the possibilities that he could so act as not to offend one-half of the nation. His dire calamity it was that he must be hated act how he would, and must be condemned by posterity. Did his enemies allow for the

[1] Which, however, is untruly stated by all historians.

[2] De Quincey seems historically wrong here. The famous "*Etcetera Oath*" was not anything imposed by democratic tribunals, but was an oath devised in 1640 by the High Church or Laudian party for vexing and depressing the Puritans. In one of the Seventeen Ecclesiastical Canons of that year passed by the Convocation of the Clergy which remained sitting after the dissolution of the Short Parliament, it was enjoined that every clergyman of the Church of England should give his oath never to consent to alter "the Government of this Church by Archbishops, Bishops, Deans and Archdeacons, &c., as it now stands established, and by right ought to stand." The form of the proposed oath caused a storm of comment. It was the first time, said the Puritan critics, that men had ever been required to swear to an *etcetera*!—M.

[3] Jeremy Taylor's *Ductor Dubitantium* was published in 1660.—M.

[4] Thomas Barlow, born 1607, became Bishop of Lincoln 1675, died 1691. In the list of his writings in Wood's *Ath. Oxon.*, Bliss's Edit., I do not find one with the exact title cited here by De Quincey.—M.

misery of this internal conflict? Milton, who never appears to more disadvantage than when he comes forward against his sovereign, is indignant that Charles should have a conscience, or plead a conscience, in a public matter. Henderson, the celebrated Scotch theologian, came post from Edinburgh to London (whence he went to Newcastle), expressly to combat the king's scruples. And he also (in his private letters) seems equally enraged as Milton that Charles should pretend to any private conscience in a state question.[1]

Now, let us ask, what was it that originally drove Charles to books of casuistry? It was the deep shock which he received, both in his affections and his conscience, from the death of Lord Strafford. Everybody had then told him, even those who felt how much the law must be outraged to obtain a conviction of Lord Strafford, how many principles of justice must be shaken, and how sadly the royal word must suffer in its sanctity—yet all had told him that it was expedient to sacrifice that nobleman. One man ought not to stand between the king and his alienated people. It was good for the common welfare that Lord Strafford should die. Charles was unconvinced. He was sure of the injustice, and perhaps he doubted even of the expedience. But his very virtues were armed against his peace. In all parts of his life self-distrust and diffidence had marked his character. What was he, a single person, to resist so many wise counsellors, and in a representative sense to resist the nation ranged on the other side? He yielded, and it is not too much to say that he never had a happy day afterwards. The stirring period of his life succeeded—the period of war, camps, treaties. Much time was not allowed him for meditation. But there is abundant proof that such time as he had always pointed his thoughts backwards to the afflicting case of Lord Strafford. This he often spoke of as the great blot, the ineffaceable transgression, of his life. For this he mourned in penitential words yet on record. To this he traced back the calamity of

[1] Henderson had been resident mainly in London since 1643, when he went thither from Scotland to assist in the Westminster Assembly of Divines. His conferences with the king at Newcastle were in May-July 1646; and he died in Edinburgh on the 19th August of the same year. De Quincey's representation of his spirit and demeanour in the Conferences does him wrong.—M.

his latter life. Lord Strafford's memorable words, "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the sons of princes," rang for ever in his ear. Lord Strafford's blood lay like a curse upon his throne.

Now, by what a pointed answer, drawn from this one case, might Charles have replied to the enemies I have noticed—to those, like so many historians since his day, who taxed him with studying casuistry for the purposes of intrigue —to those, like Milton and Henderson, who taxed him with exercising his private conscience on public questions. "I had studied no books of casuistry," he might have replied, "when I made my capital blunder in a case of conscience. I did not insist on my private conscience ; woe is me that I did not : I yielded to what was called the public conscience, in that one case which has proved the affliction of my life, and which, perhaps, it was that wrecked the national peace."

A more plenary answer there cannot be to those who suppose that casuistry is evaded by evading books of casuistry. That dread forum of conscience will for ever exist as a tribunal of doubt and difficulty. The discussion must proceed on some principle or other, good or bad ; and the only way for obtaining light is by clearing up the grounds of action, and applying the principles of moral judgment to such facts or circumstances as most frequently arise to perplex the understanding, or the affections, or the conscience.

ON WAR[1]

FEW people need be told that associations exist up and down Christendom having the ambitious object of abolishing war. Some go so far as to believe that this evil of war, so ancient, so ubiquitous, and apparently so inalienable from man's position upon earth, is already doomed: that not the private associations only, but the prevailing voice of races the most civilised, is tending to confederation against it; that sentence of extermination has virtually gone forth; and that all which remains is gradually to execute the sentence. Conscientiously, I find myself unable to join in these views. Of all romances, this seems to me the most romantic. Consequently, when asked to become a member of any such association, I have always thought it most respectful, because most sincere, to decline. Yet, as it is painful to refuse all marks of sympathy with persons whose motives one honours, I design at my death to bequeath half-a-crown as the foundation-stone of a fund for extinguishing war; the said half-crown to be improved in all time coming for the benefit of the aforesaid fund, under the trusteeship of Europe, Asia, and America, but not of Africa. I really dare not trust Africa with money, so little is she able as yet to take care of herself. This half-crown (a fund that will overshadow the earth before it comes to be wanted, under the provisions of my will) is to be improved at any interest whatever—no matter what; for the vast period of the accumulations will easily compensate any tardiness of advance, long before the

[1] Published by De Quincey in 1854 in vol. iv of the Collective Edition of his Writings; but whether previously printed in any magazine I have not ascertained. In the American Edition no previous appearance is traced.—M.

time comes for its commencing payment ; a point which will be readily understood by any gentleman that hopes to draw upon the fund, when he has read the following explanation.

There is in Ceylon a granite *cippus*, or monumental pillar, of immemorial antiquity ; and to this pillar a remarkable legend is attached. The pillar measures six feet by six—*i.e.* thirty-six square feet—on the flat quadrangular tablet of its upper horizontal surface ; and in height the pillar measures several *riyanas* (which are Ceylonese cubits of eighteen inches each) ; but of these cubits there are either eight or twelve ; excuse me for having forgotten which. At first, perhaps, you will be angry—viz. when you hear that this simple difference of four cubits, or six feet, measures a difference of your expectations, whether you count those expectations in kicks or halfpence, that absolutely strikes horror into arithmetic. The singularity of the case is that the very solemnity of the legend, and the immeasurability of time, depend upon the cubical contents of the monument, so that a loss of one granite chip is a loss of a frightful infinity ; yet, again, for that very reason, the loss of all *but* a chip, leaves behind a time-fund so appallingly inexhaustible that everybody becomes careless about the four cubits. Enough is as good as a feast. Two bottomless abysses take as much time for the diver as ten ; and five eternities are as frightful to look down as four-and-twenty. In the Ceylon legend all turns upon the inexhaustible series of ages which this pillar guarantees. But, as one inexhaustible is quite enough for one race of men, and you are sure of more by ineffable excess than you can use in any consumption of your own, naturally you become generous ; "and between friends," you say, in accepting my apologies for the doubtful error as to the four cubits, "what signifies an infinity more or less ?"

For the Ceylonese legend is this : that once, and *only* once, in every hundred years, an angel visits the granite pillar. This angel is dressed in a robe of white muslin, muslin of that kind which the Romans called *aura textilis*—woven, as might seem, from zephyrs or from pulses of the air, such in its transparency, such in its gossamer lightness. Does the angel touch the pillar with his foot ? Oh no ! Even *that* would be something, but even *that* is not allowed.

In his soundless flight across it, he suffers the hem of his impalpable robe to sweep the surface as dreamily as a moonbeam. So much and no more of pollution he endures from contact with earthly objects. The lowest extremity of his dress, but with the delicacy of light, grazes the granite surface. And *that* is all the attrition which the sacred granite receives in the course of any one century; and this is all the progress which we, poor children of earth, in any one century make towards the exhaustion of our prison-period. But, argues the subtle legend, even *that* attrition, when weighed in metaphysical scales, cannot be denied its value; it has detached from the pillar an atom of granite dust, the ratio of which atom to a grain avoirdupois, if expressed as a fraction of unity, would by its denominator stretch from the Accountant-General's office in London to the Milky Way. Now, the total mass of the granite represents, on this scheme of payment, the total arrearage of man's race, as debtors to Father Time and earthly corruption; all this intolerable score, chalked up to our debit, we by ourselves and our posterity have to rub off, before the granite will be rubbed away by the muslin robe of the proud flying angel, before time will be at an end, and the burden of flesh accomplished. Some sceptics in Ceylon offer bets upon the granite against the muslin; conceiving that the attrition of the second by the first will far outrun the inverse attrition. But, at any rate, the muslin, being worn by an angel, will never need washing; which, in oriental lands, is the capital mode of attrition—human or angelic. And the local estimate may therefore be taken as correct, which expresses in terms that will astonish Baron Rothschild what is the progress in liquidation which we make for each particular century. A billion of centuries pays off a quantity that is barely visible under a powerful lens. Despair seizes a man in contemplating a single *coupon*, no bigger than a visiting card, of such a stock as this; and behold we have to keep on paying away until the total granite is reduced to a level with a grain of mustard-seed. But, when that is accomplished, our last generation of descendants will be entitled to leave at Master Time's door a P. P. C. card, upon seeing which the meagre shadow is bound to give a receipt in full for all debts

and arrears. Perhaps the reader and I know of debts on both sides the Atlantic that have no greater prospect of being paid off much before this in Ceylon.

Naturally, to match this order of debts, moving off so slowly, there are funds that accumulate as slowly. My own funded half-crown is an illustration. The half-crown will travel in the inverse order of the granite pillar. The pillar and the half-crown move upon opposite tacks; and there *is* a point of time (which it is for Algebra to investigate) when they will cross each other in the exact moment of their punctual decussation, as you see it expressed in a St. Andrew's Cross, or letter X. From this half-way point of intersection, my aspiring half-crown will tend gradually towards the fixed stars, so that perhaps it might be right to make the man in the moon trustee for that part of the accumulations which rises above the optics of sublunary bankers; whilst the Ceylon pillar will constantly unweave its own granite texture, and dwindle earthwards. It is probable that each process will have reached its consummation about the same time. What is to be done with the mustard-seed Ceylon has forgotten to say. But what is to be done with the half-crown and its surplus nobody can doubt after reading my last will and testament. After reciting a few inconsiderable legacies to the three continents, and to the man in the moon, for any trouble they may have had in managing the hyperbolical accumulations, I go on to observe that, when war is proved to have taken itself off for ever "and no mistake" (because I foresee many false alarms of a perpetual peace), a variety of inconveniences will arise to all branches of the United Service, not excepting even the Horse Marines. Clearly there can be no more half-pay. Pensions are at an end for "good service," or fetch little more than Spanish and Greek bonds. Allowances for wounds cannot be thought of, when all wounds shall have ceased except those from female eyes—for which the Horse Guards is too little advanced in civilisation to make much allowance. Bargains there will be no more amongst auctions of old government stores. Birmingham will be ruined, or so much of Birmingham as depended upon rifles. And the great Scotch works on the river Carron will be ruined for want of beef-steaks, so far as Carron

depended for beef upon carronades. Other arrears of evil will stretch out endlessly after the extinction of war, and would tend to general bankruptcy were they not all charged upon the interminable sinking-fund of my half-crown.

Upon this fund it is (a fund able to meet anything by the time it is wanted) that I charge once and for ever the general relief of all debts, deficiencies, or burdens incident to the final extinction of war. I charge the fund with a perpetual allowance of half-pay to all the armies of earth; or indeed, whilst my hand is in, I charge it with *full* pay. And I strictly enjoin upon my trustees and executors, but especially upon the man in the moon, if his unsocial life has left him one spark of gentlemanly feeling, that he and they shall construe all claims liberally; nay, with that riotous liberality which is safe and becoming when applied to a fund so inexhaustible. Yes, reader, my fund will be inexhaustible, seeing that it cannot cease growing so long as war continues to exist. Of necessity, therefore, the inexhaustibility of my provisional fund is concurrent with that of the granite pillar in Ceylon.

Yet why, or on what principle? It is because I see a twofold necessity for war:—1st, a physical necessity arising out of man's nature when combined with man's situation; 2dly, a moral necessity connected with benefits of compensation, such as continually lurk in evils acknowledged to be such—a necessity under which it becomes lawful to say that war *ought* to exist, as a balance to opposite tendencies of a still more evil character. War is the mother of wrong and spoliation: granted; but, like other scourges in the divine economy, war purifies and redeems itself when viewed as a counterforce to greater evils that could not otherwise be intercepted or redressed. In two different meanings we say that a thing is necessary: either in that case where it is inexorably forced on by some sad overruling principle which it is vain to fight against; or, 2dly, in that case where an instrument of sorrowful consequences to man, that separately would have been hateful, passes mysteriously into an object of toleration, of hope, or even of prayer, as a counter-venom to the taint of some more mortal poison. Poverty, for instance, stands in both categories of this twofold necessity.

As a growth of physical necessity, it forms part of the primal curse ; and the Scriptures warn us that it will never cease out of the land. But, by the grandeur of man's nature, it is disarmed of its sting ; and, acting as a *moral* coercion upon the human will, it extorts innumerable graces of patience, of heroic resistance, of heaven-born energy, that would else have languished. War stands, or seems to stand, upon the same double basis of necessity ; a primary necessity that belongs to our human degradations, a secondary one that towers by means of its moral relations into the region of our impassioned grandeurs. The two propositions on which I take my stand are these :—1st, That there are nowhere latent in society any powers by which it can effectually operate on war for its extermination. The machinery is not there. The game is not within the compass of the cards. 2dly, That this defect of power is—not a curse, but on the whole a blessing from century to century, if it is an inconvenience from year to year. The Abolition Committees, it is to be feared, will be very angry at both propositions. Yet, gentlemen, hear me—strike, but hear me. That's a sort of plagiarism from Themistocles. But never mind. I have as good a right to the words, until translated back into Greek, as that most classical of yellow admirals. I protest that I should have used these words even if Themistocles had absconded into Scythia in his boyhood. "*Pereant qui ante nos nostra dixerunt !*"

The first proposition is that war *cannot* be abolished ; the second, and more offensive, that war *ought* not to be abolished. First, therefore, concerning the first. How came it into any man's heart, first of all, to conceive so audacious an idea as that of a conspiracy against war ? Whence could he draw any vapour of hope to sustain his preliminary steps ? And, in framing his plot, which way did he set his face to look out for accomplices ? Revolving this question in times past, I came to the conclusion that perhaps this colossal project of a war against war had been first put in motion under a misconception (natural enough, and countenanced by books) as to the true historical origin of wars in many notorious instances. If these had arisen on trivial impulses, a trivial resistance might have intercepted them. The one mistake

might authorise the other. If a man has once persuaded himself that long, costly, and bloody wars had arisen upon a point of ceremony, upon a personal pique, upon a hasty word, upon some explosion of momentary caprice, it is a natural inference that strength of national will, and public combinations for resistance, might prove redundantly effective when pointed against personal and casual authors of war so weak and so flexible to any stern counter-volition as those *must* be presumed whose wars had argued so much of vicious levity. The inference is unexceptionable: it is the premises that are unsound. Anecdotes of war as having emanated from a lady's tea-table or toilet would authorise such inference as to the facilities of controlling them. But the anecdotes themselves are false, or false substantially. *All* anecdotes, I fear, are false. I am sorry to say so; but my duty to the reader extorts from me the disagreeable confession, as upon a matter specially investigated by myself, that all dealers in anecdotes are tainted with mendacity. Rarer than the phœnix is that virtuous man (a monster he is —nay, he is an impossible man) who will consent to lose a prosperous anecdote on the consideration that it happens to be a lie. All history, therefore, being built partly, and some of it altogether, upon anecdotage, must be a tissue of falsehoods. Such, for the most part, is the history of Suetonius, who may be esteemed the father of anecdotage; and, being such, he (and not Herodotus) should have been honoured with the title *Father of Lies.* Such is the Augustan History, which is the main relique of the Roman Empire[1]; such is the vast series of French Memoirs, now stretching through more than three entire centuries. Universally, it may be received as a rule that, when an anecdote involves a stinging repartee, or collision of ideas fancifully and brilliantly related to each other by resemblance or contrast, then you may challenge it as false. One illustration of which is that pretty nearly every memorable *propos*, or pointed repartee, or striking *mot*, circulating at this moment in Paris or London as the undoubted property of Talleyrand (that eminent knave), was ascribed in the year 1814-15, at the Congress of Vienna, to the Prince de Ligne. About fifty

[1] For account of the Augustan History see *ante*, Vol. VI, p. 241.—M.

years earlier, many of the same *mots* were ascribed to that same Prince de Ligne, then a young man; twenty or thirty years earlier still they had been ascribed to Voltaire, and so on, regressively, to many other wits (knaves or not); until, at length, if you persist in backing far enough, you find yourself amongst Pagans, with the very same repartee, &c., doing duty in pretty good Greek [1]; sometimes, for instance, in Hierocles, sometimes in Diogenes Laertius, in Plutarch, or in Athenæus. Now the thing claimed by so many people could not belong to all of them; *all* of them, you know, could not be the inventors. Logic and common sense unite in showing us that it must have belonged to the moderns, who had clearly been hustled and robbed by the ancients, so much more likely to commit a robbery than Christians,—

[1] This is *literally* true, more frequently than would be supposed. For instance, a jest often ascribed to Voltaire, and of late pointedly reclaimed for him by Lord Brougham, as being one that he (Lord B.) could swear to for *his*, so characteristic seemed the impression of Voltaire's mind upon the *tournure* of the sarcasm, unhappily for this waste of sagacity, may be found recorded by Fabricius in the "Bibliotheca Græca" as the jest of a Greek who has been dead for about seventeen centuries. The man certainly *did* utter the jest, and 1750 years ago. But who it was that *he* stole it from is another question. To all appearance, and according to Lord Brougham's opinion, the party robbed must have been M. de Voltaire. I notice the case, however, of the Greek thefts and frauds committed upon so many of our excellent wits belonging to the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries chiefly with a view to M. de Talleyrand, that rather middling bishop, but very eminent knave. He also has been extensively robbed by the Greeks of the second and third centuries. How else can you account for so many of his sayings being found amongst *their* pages?—a thing you may ascertain in a moment, at any police office, by having the Greeks searched, for surely you would never think of searching a bishop. Most of the Talleyrand jewels will be found concealed amongst the goods of these unprincipled Greeks. But one, and the most famous in the whole jewel-case, sorry am I to confess, was nearly stolen from the bishop, not by any Greek, but by an English writer, viz. Goldsmith, who must have been dying about the time that the Right Reverend French knave had the goodness to be born. That famous *mot* about language, as a gift made to man for the purpose of *concealing* his thoughts, is lurking in Goldsmith's Essays. Think of *that*! Already, in his childhood, whilst the bishop was yet in petticoats, and almost as soon as he had begun to curse and to swear plainly in French, an Irish vagabond had attempted to swindle him out of that famous witticism which has since been as good as a life-annuity to the venerable knave's literary fame.

these ancients being all Gentiles—Pagans—Heathen dogs. What do I infer from this? Why, that, upon *any* solution of the case, hardly one worthy saying can be mentioned, hardly one jest, pun, or sarcasm, which has not been the occasion and subject of many falsehoods—as having been *au-* (and *men-*) *daciously* transferred from generation to generation, sworn to in every age as this man's property, or that man's, by people that must have known they were lying, until you retire from the investigation with a conviction that under any system of chronology the science of lying is the only one that has never drooped. Date from *Anno Domini* or from the Julian era, patronise Olympiads or patronise (as *I* do, from misanthropy, because nobody else *will*) the era of Nabonassar—no matter. Upon every road, thicker than milestones, you see records of human mendacity, or (which is much worse in my opinion) of human sympathy with other people's mendacity.

This digression, now, on anecdotes,[1] is what the learned call an *excursus*, and, I am afraid, too long by half; not strictly in proportion. But don't mind *that*. I'll make it all right, by being too short upon something else, at the next opportunity; and then nobody can complain. Meantime I argue that, as all brilliant or epigrammatic anecdotes are probably false, more especially such are all those anecdotes which, for the sake of raising wonderment, trace great wars to trivial domestic brawls. For instance, we have a French anecdote, from the latter part of the seventeenth century,

[1] The word "anecdotes" first, I believe, came into currency about the middle of the sixth century, from the use made of it by Procopius. *Literally*, it indicated nothing that could interest either public malice or public favour; it promised only *unpublished* notices of the Emperor Justinian, his wife Theodora, Narses, Belisarius, &c. But *why* had they been unpublished? Simply because scandalous and defamatory; and hence, from the interest which invested the case of an imperial court so remarkable, this oblique, secondary, and purely accidental modification of the word came to influence its *general* acceptation. So arose the word; but the *thing* arose with Suetonius, that dear, excellent, and hard-working "father of lies." [Of several works of Procopius, a Byzantine historian of the sixth century, one is entitled *Anecdota*: a compound Greek word meaning "*not given out*,"—*i.e.* "*things unpublished*," "secret stories." Four centuries earlier Suetonius had set the example in Latin without the name.—M.]

which ascribes one bloody war to the accident of a little "miff" arising between the king and his minister upon some such trifle as the situation of a palace window. Again, from the early part of the eighteenth century, we have an English anecdote ascribing consequences no less bloody to a sudden feud between two ladies, tracing itself up to a pair of gloves ; so that, in effect, the war and the gloves form the two poles of the transaction. Harlequin throws a pair of Limerick gloves into a corn-mill ; and the spectator is astonished to see the gloves immediately issuing from the hopper, well ground into seven armies of fifty thousand men each, with parks of artillery to correspond. In these two anecdotes we recognise at once the able and mendacious artist arranging his materials with a pious regard to theatrical effect. The story, for example, of the French minister Louvois, and the adroitness with which he fastened upon great foreign potentates, in the shape of war, that irritability of temper in his royal master which threatened to consume himself ; the diplomatic address with which he transmuted suddenly the task of skirmishing daily in council with his own sovereign into that far jollier mode of disputation where one replies to all objections of the very keenest logician either with round shot or with grape : here is an anecdote which (for my own part) I am inclined to view as pure gasconade. But, suppose the story true, still it may happen that a better valuation of it may disturb the whole edifice of logical inferences by which it seemed to favour the speculations of the war abolitionists. Such a tale, or the English tale of the gloves, being supposed true, it would seem to follow that war and the purposes of war were phenomena of chance growth, not attached to any instinct so ancient, or so grooved into the dark necessities of our nature, as we had all taken for granted. Usually, we rank war with hunger, with cold, with sorrow, with death, afflictions of our human state that spring up as inevitably without separate culture, and in defiance of all hostile culture, as verdure, as weeds, and as flowers that overspread in spring-time a fertile soil without needing to be sown or watered : awful is the necessity, as it seems, of all such afflictions. Yet, again, if (as these anecdotes imply) war could by possibility depend

frequently on accidents of personal temperament, on irritability in a sensual king, wounded sensibilities of pride between two sensitive ladies, there in a moment shone forth a light of hope upon the crusade against war. If *personal* accidents, and accidents so trivial, could, to any serious extent, be amongst the causes of war, then it would become a hopeful duty to preconcert personal combinations that should take an opposite direction. If casual causes could be supposed chiefly to have promoted war, how easy for a nation to arrange permanent and determinate causes against it! The logic of these anecdotes seemed to argue that the fountains of war were left to the government of chance and the windiest of levities; that war was not in reality roused into activity by the evil that resides in the human will, but, on the contrary, by the simple defect of any will energetic enough to face and control them. Multitudes of evils exist in our social system merely because no steadiness of attention, nor action of combined will, has been converged upon them. War, by the silent evidence of these anecdotes, seemed to lie amongst that class of evils. A new era might be expected to commence from the moment when the true sources of the evil were detected; and the evil would be half conquered from the moment that it should be traced to a trivial or a personal origin.

All this was plausible, but false. The anecdotes, and all similar anecdotes, might tell the truth, but not the whole truth. The logical vice in them was that they confounded an occasion with a cause. The king's ill temper, for instance, acting through the levity and impatience of the minister, might be the *causa occasionalis* of the war, but not its true *causa efficiens*. What *was*? Where do the true and ultimate causes of war, as distinguished from its proximate excitements, find their lodgment and abiding ground? They lie in the system of national competitions; in the common political system to which all individual nations are unavoidably parties; in the system of public forces distributed amongst a number of rival nations, with no internal principle for adjusting the equilibrium of these forces, and no Council of Amphictyons for deciding disputes. Here lies the *matrix* of war—viz. in a system of interests that are dangerously the

same, and therefore the parents of rivalships too keen ; that are dangerously different, and therefore the parents of alienation too wide. All war is a distinctive *nisus* for redressing the errors of equilibrium in the relative position of nations amongst nations. Every nation's duty, first, midst, and last, is to itself. No nation can be safe from continual losses of ground, but by continual jealousies, watchings, and ambitious strivings to mend its own position. Civilities and high-bred courtesies pass and ought to pass between nations ; *that* is the graceful drapery which shrouds their natural, fierce, and tiger-like relations to each other. But the glaring eyes, which express this deep and inalienable ferocity, look out at intervals from below those gorgeous draperies ; and at intervals the acts suitable to such a temper *must* come forward. Mr. Carter was on terms of the most exquisite dissimulation with his lions and tigers ; but, as often as he trusted his person amongst them, if, in the midst of infinite politeness exchanged on all sides, he saw a certain portentous expression of mutiny kindling in the eyeball of any discontented tiger, all was lost unless he came down instantly upon that tiger's skull with a blow from an iron bar that suggested something like apoplexy. On such terms do nations meet in diplomacy ; high consideration for each other does not conceal the basis of enmity on which they rest ; an enmity that does not belong to their feelings, but to the necessities of their position. Every nation in negotiating has her right hand upon the hilt of her sword, and at intervals playfully unsheaths a little of its gleaming blade. As things stand at present, war and peace are bound together like the vicissitudes of day and night, of Castor and Pollux. It matters little which bucket of the two is going up at the moment, which going down. Both are steadfastly tied by a system of alternations to a revolving wheel ; and a new war as certainly becomes due during the evolutions of a tedious peace as a new peace may be looked for during the throes of a bloody war. Consequently, when the arrogant Louvois carried a war to the credit of his own little account on the national ledger of France, this coxcomb well knew that a war was at any rate due about that time. Irritable or not irritable, with a puppy for his minister or not, the French king would

naturally, within a year or two, have been carried headlong into war by the mere system of Europe. So much had the causes of complaint reciprocally accumulated. The account must be cleansed, the court roll of grievances must be purged. With respect to the two English ladies, again, it is still more evident that they could not have *caused* a war by pulling caps with each other, since the grounds of every war—what had caused it, and what prolonged it—were sure to be sternly scrutinised by Parliament at each annual revision of the national finances. These ladies, and even the French coxcomb, could not have *caused* a war; they at the utmost might have claimed a distinction such as that which belonged to a particular Turkish gunner at Navarino—viz. that he, by firing the first shot without orders, did (as a matter of fact) unmuzzle the whole of that dreadful iron hurricane from four nations which instantly followed, but which (be it known to the gunner) could not have been delayed for fifty minutes longer (such was the temper of the Turkish forces) whether he had fired, or had forborne to fire, the unauthorised shot.[1]

One of the earliest aspects under which this moral necessity for war forces itself upon our notice is its physical necessity. I mean to say that one of the earliest reasons why war *ought* to exist is because, under any mode of suppressing war, virtually it *will* exist. Banish war as now administered, and it will revolve upon us in a worse shape; that is, in a shape of predatory and ruffian war, more and more licentious, as it enjoys no privilege or sufferance, by the supposition, under municipal laws. Will the causes of war die away because war is forbidden? Certainly not; and the only result of the prohibition would be to throw back the exercise of war from national into private and mercenary hands; and *that* is precisely the retrograde or inverted course of civilisation; for, in the natural order of civilisation, war passes from the hands of knights, barons, insulated cities, into those of the universal community; from the lawless *guerilla* to the state of national war administered with the responsibility that belongs to supreme rank, with the humanity that belongs to

[1] The battle of Navarino, in which the combined British, French, and Russian fleets annihilated the Turkish and Egyptian, was fought 20th October 1827.—M.

conscious power, and with the diminishing havoc that belongs to increasing skill in the arts of destruction. Even as to this last feature in human conflicts, which in a warfare of brigands and *condottieri* would for many reasons rapidly decay, no reader can fail to be aware of the marvels effected by the forces of inventive science that run alongside the advances of civilisation. Look back even to the grandest period of the humane Roman warfare; listen to the noblest and most merciful of all Roman captains saying on the day of Pharsalia (and saying of necessity) "Strike at their faces, cavalry"; yes, absolutely directing his own troopers to plough up with their sabres the blooming faces of the young Roman nobility.[1] Look back, I say, to this, and then pass to a modern field of battle, where all is finished by musketry and artillery amidst clouds of smoke, no soldier recognising his own desolations, or the ghastly ruins worked by his own separate arm; so that war, by losing all its brutality, has lost half of its demoralising power.

War, so far from ending because war was forbidden and nationally renounced, on the contrary would transmigrate into a more fearful shape. As things are at present (and, observe, they are always growing better), what numbers of noble-minded men, in the persons of our officers (yes, and often of non-commissioned officers), do we British, for example, disperse over battle-fields, that could not dishonour their glorious uniform by any countenance to an act of cruelty! They are *eyes* delegated from the charities of our domestic life to overlook and curb the licence of war. I remember, in Xenophon, some passage where he describes a class of Persian gentlemen, who were called the ὀφθαλμοι, or *eyes*, of the king; but for a very different purpose. These British officers may be called the *ophthalmoi*, or eyes, of our Sovereign Lady, that into every corner of the battle carry their scrutiny, lest any cruelty should be committed on the helpless, or any advantage taken of a dying eneny. But such officers would be rare in the irregular troops succeeding to official armies. And through this channel, amongst others, war, when cried

[1] The battle of Pharsalia, in which Cæsar, with 22,000 foot-soldiers and 1000 cavalry, defeated Pompey, with 45,000 foot-soldiers and 7000 cavalry, was fought in August, 48 B.C.—M.

down by act of Parliament, and precisely *because* it was cried down, would become perilously effective for the degradation of human nature. Being itself dishonoured, war would become so much the more effective as an instrument for the dishonouring of its agents.

But is war, then, to go on for ever? Are we never to improve? Are nations to conduct their intercourse eternally under the secret understanding that an unchristian solution of all irreconcilable feuds stands in the rear as the ultimate appeal? I answer that war, going on even for ever, may still be for ever amending its modes and its results upon human happiness; 2dly, that we not only are under no fatal arrest in our process of improvement, but that, as regards war, history shows how steadily we *have* been improving; and, 3dly, that, although war may be irreversible as our last resource in the prosecution of national disputes, this last resource may constantly be retiring further into the rear. Let us speak to this last point. War is the last resource, only because other and more intellectual resources for solving disputes are not available. And *why* are they not? Simply, because the knowledge, and the logic, which ultimately will govern the case, and the very circumstances of the case itself in its details, as the basis on which this knowledge and logic are to operate, happen not to have been sufficiently developed. A code of law is not a spasmodic effort of gigantic talent in any one man or any one generation; it is a slow growth of accidents and occasions expanding with civilisation; dependent upon time as a multiform element in its development; and presupposing often a concurrent growth of *analogous* cases towards the completion of its comprehension. For instance, the law which regulates the rights of shipping, seafaring men, and maritime commerce, how slow was its development! Before such works as the "Consolato del Mare," the "Laws of Oléron," &c.,[1] had been matured, how wide must have been the experience, and how slow its accumulation! During

[1] *Il Consolato del Mare* (consulship of the sea) was the name of a written code of international laws of the thirteenth century for regulating the commerce of the Mediterranean; *Jugements d'Oléron* is the name of a similar maritime code compiled in France in the same century, on the supposition that it was enacted at the island of Oléron on the French coast.—M.

that long period of infancy for law, how many must have been the openings for ignorant and unintentional injustice! How differently, again, would the several parties to any transaction construe the rights of the case! Discussion, without rules for guiding it, does but embitter the dispute. And in the absence of all guidance from the intellect, gradually weaving a *common* standard of international appeal, it is clear that nations *must* fight, and *ought* to fight. Not being convinced, it is base to pretend that you *are* convinced; and, failing to be convinced by your neighbour's arguments, you confess yourself a poltroon (and you *invite* injuries) if you pocket what you think your wrongs. The only course in such a case is to thump your neighbour, and to thump him soundly, for the present. This treatment is very serviceable to your neighbour's optics; he sees things in a new light, after a sufficient course of so distressing a regimen. Yet, even in this case, war has no tendency to propagate war, but tends to the very opposite result. To thump is as costly, and in other ways as painful, as to *be* thumped. The evil to both sides arises in an undeveloped state of law. If rights were defined by a well-considered code growing out of long experience, each party sees that this scourge of war would continually tend to narrow itself. Consequently the very necessity of war, the very admission of the truth that war cannot be dispensed with as our ultimate appeal, becomes the strongest invitation to that system of judicial logic which forms its final limitation. It follows that all war whatever (unless on the brutal principle of a Spartan warfare,[1] that

[1] "*Spartan warfare*":—It was a tradition in Greece that about seven centuries before Christ the "Iliad" was carried into Sparta; some said, by Lycurgus the lawgiver when returning from his travels. But the tradition added that the importer excluded the "Odyssey"; not as being non-Homeric — for which objection that age was not critical enough; but as tending to cherish ideas of happiness derived from peace and the domestic affections; whereas the "Iliad" exhibited war as the final object for which man existed. Whether this tradition were well founded or not, it shows us in either case what was the reputed character through Greece of the Spartan. No tribe of semi-savages on record ever laboured so effectually as the Spartans to strip war of all its grandeur by clothing it with ungenerous arrogance; and the consequence is that all readers to this day rejoice in every defeat and humiliation which this kennel of hounds sustained.

made war its own sufficient object and self-justification) operates as a perpetual bounty or premium upon the investigation and adjudication of those disputed cases through which it is that war prospers.

Such cases are continually withdrawing themselves from that state of imperfect development which enforced a warlike appeal to a state in which they allow of an amicable solution. All this we may see mirrored in a class of cases that powerfully illustrate the good and the bad in war—viz. those cases of domestic dispute which continually arise under the law of neighbourhood.

Now, this law of neighbourhood, this *lex vicinitatis*, amongst the Romans righted itself, as amongst ourselves it continues to do, by means of actions at law. If a man poisons us with smoke, we compel him by an action to consume his own smoke. Here is beheld a transmuted war. In a barbarous state, fire and sword would have avenged this invasion of smoke; but, amongst civilised men, judicial investigations beat off the enemy. And on the same principle, exactly as the law of international rights clears up its dark places, war gradually narrows its grounds, and the *jus gentium* defines itself through national attorneys—that is, through diplomatists.

I have myself witnessed a case where a man cultivating a flower-garden, and distressed for some deliverance from his rubbish of dead leaves, litter, straw, stones, took the desperate resolution of projecting the whole upon his neighbour's flower-garden. This wrong might have passed unnoticed, but for the accident that his injured neighbour unexpectedly raised up his head above the dividing wall, and reproached the aggressor with his unprincipled conduct. This aggressor, adding evil to evil, suggested, as an obvious remedy for his own outrage, that the sufferer should pass the nuisance onwards to the garden next beyond him; from which it might be posted forward indefinitely on the same principle. The aggrieved man, however, preferred passing back the rubbish, without any discount, to the original proprietor. Here now was a ripe case, a *causa teterrima*, for war between the parties; and for a national war, had the parties been nations. In fact, the very same injury, in a more aggravated

shape, is perpetrated from time to time by Jersey, upon ourselves, and would, upon a larger scale, right itself by war. Convicts are costly to maintain; and Jersey, whose national revenue is limited, being too well aware of this distressing fact, does us the favour to land upon the coasts of Dorset, Devon, &c., all the criminals whom she cannot otherwise dispose of at each jail-delivery. "What are *we* to do in England?" is the natural question propounded by the injured scoundrels, when taking leave of their Jersey escort. "Anything you please," is the answer; "rise, if you can, to be dukes; only never come back hither; since, dukes or *no* dukes for the rest of Christendom, to *us* of the Channel Islands you will always be transported felons." There is therefore a good right of action—*i.e.* a good ground of war —against Jersey on the part of Great Britain; since, besides the atrocious injury inflicted, this unprincipled little island has the audacity to regard our England (all Europe looking on) as existing only for the purposes of a sewer or cesspool to receive *her* impurities. Some time back I remember a Scottish newspaper holding up the case as a newly-discovered horror in the social system; though, by the way, Jersey has always been engaged in this branch of exportation, and rarely, I am told, fails to "run" a cargo of rogues upon our shore once or so in a season. But what amuses one in this Scottish denunciation of the villainy is that Scotland[1] of old pursued the very same mode of jail-delivery as to knaves that were not thought ripe for hanging: she carted them to the English border, unchained them, and hurried them adrift into the wilderness of Northumberland, saying, "Now, boys, shift for yourselves; repent; and henceforth plunder none but Englishmen."

What I deduce from all this is that, as the feuds arising between individuals under the relation of neighbours are so far from tending to an increasing hostile result that, on the contrary, as coming under a rule of law already ascertained, or furnishing the basis for a new rule, they gradually tighten

[1] To banish them "forth of the kingdom" was the *euphemismus*, the sweet, caressing mode of expressing the case; but the reality understood was to carry the knaves, like foxes in a bag, to the English border, and there unbag them for English use.

the cords which exclude all opening for quarrel, not otherwise is the result, and therefore the usefulness, of war amongst nations. All the causes of war, the occasions upon which it is likely to arise, the true and the ostensible motives, are gradually evolved, are examined, searched, valued, by publicists; and by such means, in the further progress of men, a comprehensive law of nations will finally be accumulated, not such as now passes for international law (a worthless code that *has* no weight in the practice of nations, nor deserves any), but one which will exhaust the great body of cases under which wars have arisen during the Christian era, and will gradually collect a public opinion of Christendom upon the nature of each particular case. The causes that *have* existed for war are the causes that *will* exist; or, at least, they are the same under modifications that will simply vary the rule, as our law cases in the courts are every day circumstantiating the generalities of the statute concerned. At this stage of advance, and when a true European opinion has been created, a "*sensus communis*," or community of feeling on the main classifications of wars, it will become possible to erect an operative tribunal, or central Amphictyonic Council for all Chistendom, not with any commission to suppress wars—a policy which would react as a fresh cause of war, since high-spirited nations would arm for the purpose of resisting such arrogant decrees—but with the purpose and the effect of oftentimes healing local or momentary animosities, and also (by publishing the opinion of Europe assembled in council) with the effect of taking away the shadow of dishonour from the act of making concessions. Not to mention that the mere delay involved in the waiting for the solemn opinion of a congress would always be friendly to pacific counsels. But *would* the belligerents wait? That concession might be secured by general exchange of treaties, in the same way that the co-operation of so many nations has been secured to the suppression of the trade in slaves. And one thing is clear,—that, when all the causes of war involving *manifest* injustice are banished by the force of European opinion focally converged upon the subject, the range of war will be prodigiously circumscribed. The costliness of war (which for various reasons has been continually

increasing since the feudal period) will operate as another limitation upon its field, concurring powerfully with the public declaration from a Council of collective Christendom.

There is, besides, a distinct and separate cause of war, more fatal to the continued duration of peace in Europe than open injustice; and, this cause being to a certainty in the hands of nations to deal with as they please, there is a tolerable guarantee that a congress *sincerely* pacific would cut it up by the roots. It is a cause noticed by Kant in his essay on a Perpetual Peace[1]; and this cause lies in the diplomacy of Europe. Treaties of peace are at present so constructed as almost always to sow the seeds of future wars. To the inexperienced this seems a matter of carelessness or laxity in the choice of expression; and sometimes it may be so; but more often it has been the result of secret dictation from powerful courts—making peaces only as truces, anxious only for time to nurse their energies, and to keep open some plausible call for war. This is not only amongst the most extensive causes of war, but amongst the worst; because it gives a colourable air of justice, and almost of necessity, to a war which is, in fact, the most outrageously unjust, as being derived from a pretext silently prepared in former years with mere subtlety of malice; it is a war growing out of occasions forged beforehand lest no occasions should spontaneously arise. And yet how easily might this cause of war be healed by a Congress, and through a reform in European Diplomacy![2]

It is the strongest confirmation of the power inherent in growing civilisation to amend war, and to narrow the field of

[1] See *ante*, pp. 118-125.

[2] One great *nidus* of this insidious preparation for war under the very mask of peace, which Kant has failed to particularise, lies in the neglecting to make any provision at all for cases that are inevitable. A, B, C, D, are all equally possible; but the treaty provides a specific course of action only for A, suppose. Then, upon B or C arising, the high contracting parties, though desperately pacific, find themselves committed to war actually by a treaty of lasting peace. Their pacific majesties sigh, and say, Alas, that it should be so! but really fight we must, because the treaty makes no provision for keeping the peace in the particular case before us. The very same evil, from the very same neglect of providing for cases sure to arise, forms the most extensive source of disputes arising upon contracts in domestic life.

war, if we look back for the records of the changes in this direction which have already arisen in generations before our own.

The most careless reviewer of History can hardly fail to read a rude outline of progress made by men in the rights (and consequently in the duties) of war through the last twenty-five centuries. It is a happy circumstance for man that oftentimes he is led by pure selfishness into reforms the very same as high principle would have prompted; and, in the next stage of his advance, when once habituated to an improved code of usages, he begins to find a gratification to his sensibilities (partly luxurious sensibilities, but partly moral) in what originally had been a mere movement of self-interest. Then comes a third stage, in which, having thoroughly reconciled himself to a better order of things, and made it even necessary to his own comfort, at length he begins in his reflecting moments to perceive a moral beauty and a fitness in arrangements that had originally emanated from accidents of convenience; so that, finally, he generates a sublime pleasure of conscientiousness out of that which had commenced in the meanest forms of mercenary convenience. For instance, a Roman lady of rank, as luxury advanced, out of mere voluptuous regard to her own comfort, revolted from the harsh clamours of eternal chastisements inflicted on her numerous slaves; she forbade them; the grateful slaves showed their love for her; this love, by natural reaction, awakened her own benevolent sensibilities; gradually and unintentionally she trained her feelings, when thus liberated from a continual temptation to cruelty, into a demand for gentler and purer excitement. Her purpose originally had been one of luxury; but, by the benignity of nature still watching for ennobling opportunities, the actual result was a development given to the higher capacities of her heart. In the same way, when the brutal right (and in many circumstances the brutal duty) of inflicting death upon prisoners taken in battle had exchanged itself for the profits of ransom or slavery, this relaxation of ferocity (though commencing in selfishness) gradually exalted itself into a habit of mildness, and some dim perception of a sanctity in human life. The very vice of avarice ministered to the purification of bar-

barism ; and the very evil of slavery in its earliest form was applied to the mitigation of another evil—war conducted in the spirit of piratical outrage. The commercial instincts of men having worked one set of changes in war, a second set of changes was prompted by instincts derived from the arts of ornament and pomp. Martial music, splendour of arms, of banners, of equipages, of ceremonies, and the elaborate forms of intercourse with enemies, through conferences, armistices, treaties of peace, &c., having tamed the savagery of war, a permanent light of civilisation began to steal over the bloody shambles of buccaneering warfare. Other modes of harmonising influences arose more directly from the bosom of war itself. Gradually the mere practice of war, and the culture of war, though still viewed as a rude trade of blood-shed, ripened into an intellectual art. Were it merely with a view to more effectual carnage, this art (however simple and gross at first) opened at length into wide subordinate arts, into strategics, into tactics, into castrametation, into poliorcetics, and all the processes through which the first rude efforts of martial cunning finally connect themselves with the exquisite resources, mathematic and philosophic, of a complex science. War being a game in which each side forces the other into the instant adoption of all improvements, through the mere necessities of self-preservation, becomes continually, and must become, more intellectual.

It is interesting to observe the steps by which (were it only through impulses of self-defence, and with a view to more effectual destructiveness) war exalted itself from a horrid trade of butchery into a magnificent and enlightened science. Starting from no higher impulse or question than how to cut throats most rapidly, most safely, and on the largest scale, it has issued even at our own stage of advance into a science, magnificent, oftentimes ennobling, and cleansed from all horrors except those which (not being within man's power utterly to divorce from it) no longer stand out as reproaches to his humanity.

What opening is there for complaint? If the object is to diminish the frequency of war, this is, at any rate, secured by the enormous and growing costliness of war. In these days of accountability on the part of governments, and of jealous

vigilance on the part of tax-payers, we may safely leave it to the main interests of almost every European population not to allow of idle or frivolous wars. Merely the public debts of Christendom form a pledge, were there no other, that superfluous wars will no longer be tolerated by those who pay for them, and whose children inherit their consequences. The same cause which makes war continually rarer will tend to make each separate war shorter. There will, therefore, in the coming generations, be less of war; and what there is will, by expanding civilisation, and, indirectly, through science continually more exquisite [1] applied to its administration, be indefinitely humanised and refined.

It is sufficient, therefore, as an apology for war, that it is —1st, systematically improving in temper (privateering, for instance, at sea, sacking of cities by land, are in a course of abolition); 2dly, that it is under a necessity of becoming less frequent; 3dly, that on any attempt to abolish it the result would be something very much worse.

Thus far, meantime, war has been palliated merely by its relation to something else: viz. to its own elder stages as trespassing much more upon human happiness and progress; and, secondly, by its relation to any conceivable state that could take place on the assumption that war were abolished by a Pan-Christian compact. But is this all that can be

[1] "*Science more exquisite*":—How inadequately this is appreciated may be seen in the popular opinion applied to our wars with the Chinese and Burmese—viz. that gradually we shall teach those semi-barbarous peoples to fight. Some obvious improvements, purchasable with money, it is probable enough, will be adopted from us. But, as to any general improvement of their military system, this is not of a nature to be transferred. The science, for instance, applied to our artillery and engineering systems presupposes a total change of education, and the establishment of new institutions. It will not be sufficient to have institutions for teaching mathematics; these must be supported by a demand for mathematic knowledge in every quarter of public industry, in civil engineering, in nautical commerce, in mining, &c. Moreover, the manufacturing establishments that would be required as a basis of support for the improved science, such as cannon-foundries, manufactories of philosophical instruments, &c., presuppose a concurrent expansion in many other directions, so as to furnish not only new means, but also new motives, and, in short, presuppose an entire new civilisation.

pleaded on behalf of war? Is it good only in so far as it stands opposed to something worse? No. Under circumstances that may exist, and have existed, war is a *positive* good; not relative merely, or negative, but positive. A great truth it was which Wordsworth uttered, whatever might be the expansion which he allowed to it, when he said that

> "God's most perfect instrument
> In working out a pure intent
> Is man arrayed for mutual slaughter:
> Yea, Carnage is His daughter."

There is a mystery in approaching this aspect of the case which no man has read fully. War has a deeper and more ineffable relation to hidden grandeurs in man than has yet been deciphered. To execute judgments of retribution upon outrages offered to human rights or to human dignity, to vindicate the sanctities of the altar and the sanctities of the hearth: these are functions of human greatness which war has many times assumed, and many times faithfully discharged. But, behind all these, there towers dimly a greater. The great phenomenon of war it is, this and this only, which keeps open in man a spiracle—an organ of respiration—for breathing a transcendent atmosphere, and dealing with an idea that else would perish: viz. the idea of mixed crusade and martyrdom, doing and suffering, that finds its realisation in a battle such as that of Waterloo—viz. a battle fought for interests of the human *race*, felt even where they are not understood; so that the tutelary Angel of Man, when he traverses such a dreadful field, when he reads the distorted features, counts the ghastly ruins, sums the hidden anguish, and the harvests

> "Of horror breathing from the silent ground,"

nevertheless, speaking as God's messenger, "blesses it, and calls it very good."

POSTSCRIPT[1]

In this paper, from having faultily adjusted its proportions in the original outline, I find that I have dwelt too briefly and too feebly upon the capital interest at stake. To apply a correction to some popular misreadings of History, to show that the criminal (because trivial) occasions of war are not always its true causes, or to suggest that war (if resigned to its own natural movement of progress) is cleansing itself and ennobling itself constantly and inevitably, were it only through its connexion with science ever more and more exquisite, and through its augmented costliness: all this may have its use in offering some restraint upon the levity of action or of declamation in Peace Societies. But all this is below the occasion. I feel that far grander interests are at stake in this contest. The Peace Societies are falsely appreciated when they are described as merely deaf to the lessons of experience and as too "*romantic*" in their expectations. The very opposite is to *my* thinking their criminal reproach. He that is romantic errs usually by too much elevation. He violates the standard of reasonable expectation by drawing too violently upon the nobilities of human nature. But, on the contrary, the Peace Societies would, if their power kept pace with their guilty purposes, work degradation for man by drawing upon his most effeminate and luxurious cravings for ease. Most heartily, and with my profoundest sympathy, do I go along with Wordsworth in his grand lyrical proclamation

[1] What is here printed as a "Postscript" formed part of De Quincey's "Preface" to the volume of his Collected Writings containing the paper on War.—M.

of a truth not less divine than it is mysterious, not less triumphant than it is sorrowful: viz. that amongst God's holiest instruments for the elevation of human nature is "mutual slaughter" amongst men,—yes, that "Carnage is God's daughter." Not deriving my own views in this matter from Wordsworth, not knowing even whether I hold them on the same grounds, since Wordsworth has left *his* grounds unexplained, nevertheless I cite them in honour, as capable of the holiest justification. The instruments rise in grandeur, carnage and mutual slaughter rise in holiness, exactly as the motives and the interests rise on behalf of which such awful powers are invoked. Fighting for truth in its last recesses of sanctity, for human dignity systematically outraged, or for human rights mercilessly trodden under foot—champions of such interests, men first of all descry, as from a summit suddenly revealed, the possible grandeur of bloodshed suffered or inflicted. Judas and Simon Maccabæus in days of old, Gustavus Adolphus [1] in modern days, fighting for the violated rights of conscience against perfidious despots and murdering oppressors, exhibit to us the incarnations of Wordsworth's principle. Such wars are of rare occurrence. Fortunately they are so; since, under the possible contingencies of human strength and weakness, it might else happen that the grandeur of the principle should suffer dishonour through the incommensurate means for maintaining it. But such cases, though emerging rarely, are always to be reserved in men's minds as ultimate appeals to what is most divine in man. Happy it is for human welfare that the blind heart of man is a thousand times wiser than his understanding. An *arrière pensée* should lie hidden in all minds—a holy reserve as to

[1] The Thirty Years' War, from 1618 to the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, was notoriously the last, and the decisive, conflict between Popery and Protestantism; the result of that war it was which finally enlightened all the Popish princes of Christendom as to the impossibility of ever suppressing the antagonist party by mere force of arms. I am not meaning, however, to utter any opinion whatever on the religious position of the two great parties. It is sufficient for entire sympathy with the royal Swede that he fought for the freedom of conscience. Many an enlightened Roman Catholic, supposing only that he were not a Papist, would have given his hopes and his confidence to the Protestant king.

cases which *may* arise similar to such as HAVE arisen, where a merciful bloodshed[1] has been authorised by the express voice of God. Such a reserve cannot be dispensed with. It belongs to the principle of progress in man that he should for ever keep open a secret commerce in the last resort with the spirit of martyrdom on behalf of man's most saintly interests.

[1] "*Merciful bloodshed*":—In reading either the later religious wars of the Jewish people under the Maccabees or the earlier under Joshua, every philosophic reader will have felt the true and transcendent spirit of mercy which resides virtually in such wars, as maintaining the unity of God against Polytheism, and, by trampling on cruel idolatries, as indirectly opening the channels for benign principles of morality through endless generations of men. Here especially he will have read one justification of Wordsworth's bold doctrine upon war. Thus far he will descry a wisdom working from afar; but, as regards the immediate present, he will be apt to adopt the ordinary view—viz. that in the Old Testament severity prevails approaching to cruelty. Yet, on consideration, he will be disposed to qualify this opinion. He will have observed many indications of a relenting kindness and a tenderness of love in the Mosaical ordinances. And recently there has been suggested another argument tending to the same conclusion. In the last work of Mr. Layard ("Discoveries in the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon, 1853") are published some atrocious monuments of the Assyrian cruelty in the treatment of military captives. In one of the plates of Chap. XX, at page 456, is exhibited some unknown torture applied to the head; and in another, at page 458, is exhibited the abominable process, applied to two captives, of flaying them alive. One such case had been previously recorded in human literature, and illustrated by a plate. It occurs in a Dutch voyage to the islands of the East. The subject of the torment in that case was a woman who had been charged with some act of infidelity to her husband. And the local government, being indignantly summoned to interfere by some Christian strangers, had declined to do so—on the plea that the man was master within his own house. But the Assyrian case was worse. This torture was there applied, not upon a sudden vindictive impulse, but in cold blood, to a simple case apparently, of civil disobedience or revolt. Now, when we consider how intimate, and how ancient, was the connexion between Assyria and Palestine, how many things (in war especially) were transferred mediately through the intervening tribes (all habitually cruel) from the people on the Tigris to those on the Jordan, I feel convinced that Moses must have interfered most peremptorily and determinately, and not merely by verbal ordinances, but by establishing counter-usages, against this spirit of barbarity; otherwise it would have increased contagiously; whereas we meet with no such hellish atrocities amongst the children of Israel. In the case of one memorable outrage by a Hebrew tribe, the national vengeance which overtook it was complete and fearful beyond all that History has recorded.

In proportion as the instruments for upholding or retrieving such saintly interests should come to be dishonoured or less honoured would the inference be valid that those interests were shaking in their foundations. And any confederation or compact of nations for abolishing war would be the inauguration of a downward path for man.

A battle is by possibility the grandest, and also the meanest, of human exploits. It is the grandest when it is fought for godlike truth, for human dignity, or for human rights; it is the meanest when it is fought for petty advantages (as, by way of example, for accession of territory which adds nothing to the security of a frontier), and still more when it is fought simply as a gladiator's trial of national prowess. This is the principle upon which very naturally our British schoolboys value a battle. Painful it is to add that this is the principle upon which our adult neighbours the French seem to value a battle.

To any man who, like myself, admires the high-toned martial gallantry of the French, and pays a cheerful tribute of respect to their many intellectual triumphs, it is painful to witness the childish state of feeling which the French people manifest on every possible question that connects itself at any point with martial pretensions. A battle is valued by them on the same principles, not better and not worse, as govern our own schoolboys. Every battle is viewed by the boys as a test applied to the personal prowess of each individual soldier; and, naturally, amongst boys it would be the merest hypocrisy to take any higher ground. But amongst adults, arrived at the power of reflecting and comparing, we look for something nobler. We English estimate Waterloo, not by its amount of killed and wounded, but as the battle which terminated a series of battles having one common object—viz. the overthrow of a frightful tyranny. A great sepulchral shadow rolled away from the face of Christendom as that day's sun went down to his rest: for, had the success been less absolute, an opportunity would have offered for negotiation, and consequently for an infinity of intrigues through the feuds always gathering upon national jealousies amongst allied armies: the dragon would soon have healed his wounds; after which the prosperity of the

despotism would have been greater than before. But, without reference to Waterloo in particular, *we*, on *our* part, find it impossible to contemplate any memorable battle otherwise than according to its tendency towards some commensurate object. To the French this must be impossible, seeing that no lofty (that is, no disinterested) purpose has ever been so much as counterfeited for a French war, nor therefore for a French battle. Aggression, cloaked at the very utmost in the garb of retaliation for counter-aggressions on the part of the enemy, stands forward uniformly in the van of such motives as it is thought worth while to plead. But in French casuistry it is not held necessary to plead *any*thing: war justifies itself. To fight for the experimental purpose of trying the proportions of martial merit, but (to speak frankly) for the purpose of publishing and renewing to Europe the proclamation of French superiority: *that* is the object of French wars. Like the Spartan of old, the Frenchman would hold that a state of peace, and not a state of war, is the state which calls for apology, and that already from the first such an apology must wear a very suspicious aspect of paradox.

ON SUICIDE[1]

It is a remarkable proof of the inaccuracy with which most men read that Donne's *Biathanatos*[2] has been supposed to countenance suicide; and those who reverence his name have thought themselves obliged to apologise for it by urging that it was written before he entered the Church.[3] But Donne's purpose in this treatise was a pious one. Many authors had charged the martyrs of the Christian Church with suicide, on the principle that, if I put myself in the way of a mad bull, knowing that he will kill me, I am as much chargeable with an act of self-destruction as if I fling myself into a river. Several casuists had extended this principle even to the case of Jesus Christ; one instance of which, in a modern author, the reader may see noticed and condemned by Kant, in his *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft*; and another of much earlier date (as far

[1] Appeared originally in the *London Magazine* for November 1823, as one article in a series of odds and ends which De Quincey was contributing to successive numbers of that periodical under the title "Notes from the Pocket-Book of a Late Opium-Eater." When issuing the Collective Edition of his writings from 1853 onwards, De Quincey broke up that series, converting several of the longer articles in it into independent papers in the Collective Edition. The present little article has its proper place here, both on account of its ethical character and also because it connects itself specially with a passage in the preceding paper on *Casuistry*.—M.

[2] See *ante*, pp. 335-338.—M.

[3] Donne (born 1573) did not become a clergyman till 1616, when he was forty-three years of age,—having led till then a secular life of lawyerly training, poetical and other literary experiments, and peculiar reputation among the London wits.—M.

back as the 13th century, I think) in a commoner book—Voltaire's notes on the little treatise of Beccaria *Dei delitti e delle pene*. These statements tended to one of two results: either they unsanctified the characters of those who founded and nursed the Christian Church; or they sanctified suicide. By way of meeting them, Donne wrote his book: and, as the whole argument of his opponents turned upon a false definition of suicide (not explicitly stated, but assumed), he endeavoured to reconstitute the notion of what is essential to create an act of suicide. Simply to kill a man is not murder: *prima facie*, therefore, there is some sort of presumption that simply for a man to kill himself may not always be so: there is such a thing as simple homicide distinct from murder: there may, therefore, possibly be such a thing as self-homicide distinct from self-murder. There *may* be a ground for such a distinction, *ex analogia*. But, secondly, on examination, *is* there any ground for such a distinction? Donne affirms that there is; and, reviewing several eminent cases of spontaneous martyrdom, he endeavours to show that acts so motived and so circumstantiated will not come within the notion of suicide properly defined.

Meantime, may not this tend to the encouragement of suicide in general, and without discrimination of its species? No: Donne's arguments have no prospective reference or application; they are purely retrospective. The circumstances necessary to create an act of mere self-homicide can rarely concur except in a state of disordered society, and during the *cardinal* revolutions of human history: where, however, they *do* concur, there it will not be suicide. In fact, this is the natural and practical judgment of us all. We do not all agree on the particular cases which will justify self-destruction; but we all feel and involuntarily acknowledge (*implicitly* acknowledge in our admiration, though not explicitly in our words or in our principles) that there *are* such cases. There is no man who in his heart would not reverence a woman that chose to die rather than to be dishonoured; and, if we do not say that it is her duty to do so, *that* is because the moralist must condescend to the weakness and infirmities of human nature: mean and

ignoble natures must not be taxed up to the level of noble ones. Again, with regard to the other sex, corporal punishment is its peculiar and *sexual* degradation ; and, if ever the distinction of Donne can be applied safely to any case, it will be to the case of him who chooses to die rather than to submit to that ignominy. *At present*, however, there is but a dim and very confined sense, even amongst enlightened men (as we may see by the debates of Parliament), of the injury which is done to human nature by giving legal sanction to such brutalising acts ; and therefore most men, in seeking to escape it, would be merely shrinking from a *personal* dishonour. Corporal punishment is usually argued with a single reference to the case of him who suffers it ; and, *so* argued, God knows that it is worthy of all abhorrence : but the weightiest argument against it is the foul indignity which is offered to our common nature lodged in the person of him on whom it is inflicted. *His* nature is *our* nature ; and, supposing it possible that *he* were so far degraded as to be unsusceptible of any influences but those which address him through the brutal part of his nature, yet for the sake of ourselves,—no! not merely for ourselves or for the human race now existing, but for the sake of human nature, which transcends all existing participators of that nature,—we should remember that the evil of corporal punishment is not to be measured by the poor transitory criminal, whose memory and offence are soon to perish. These, in the sum of things, are as nothing : the injury which can be done him, and the injury which he can do, have so momentary an existence that they may be safely neglected ; but the abiding injury is to the most august interest which for the mind of man can have any existence,—viz. to his own nature : to raise and dignify which, I am persuaded, is the first, last, and holiest command [1] which the conscience imposes on the

[1] On which account I am the more struck by the ignoble argument of those statesmen who have contended in the House of Commons that such and such classes of men in this nation are not accessible to any loftier influences. Supposing that there were any truth in this assertion,—which is a libel not on this nation only, but on man in general,—surely it is the duty of lawgivers not to perpetuate by their institutions the evil which they find, but to presume and gradually to create a better spirit.

philosophic moralist. In countries where the traveller has the pain of seeing human creatures performing the labours of brutes,[1] surely the sorrow which the spectacle moves, if a wise sorrow, will not be chiefly directed to the poor degraded individual,—too deeply degraded, probably, to be sensible of his own degradation,—but to the reflection of that man's nature as thus exhibited in a state of miserable abasement, and, what is worst of all, abasement proceeding from man himself.

Now, whenever this view of corporal punishment becomes general (as inevitably it will, under the influence of advancing civilisation), I say that Donne's principle will then become applicable to this case, and it will be the duty of a man to die rather than to suffer his own nature to be dishonoured in that way. But, so long as a man is not fully sensible of the dishonour, to him the dishonour, except as a personal one, does not wholly exist. In general, whenever a paramount interest of human nature is at stake, a suicide which maintains that interest is self-homicide; but, for a personal interest, it becomes self-murder. And into this principle Donne's may be resolved.

A doubt has been raised whether brute animals ever commit suicide. To me it is obvious that they do not, and cannot. Some years ago, however, there was a case reported in all the newspapers of an old ram who committed suicide (as it was alleged) in the presence of many witnesses. Not having any pistols or razors, he ran for a short distance, in order to aid the impetus of his descent, and leaped over a

[1] Of which degradation let it never be forgotten that France but *thirty* years ago [*i.e.* about 1793] presented as shocking cases as any country, even where slavery is tolerated. An eye-witness to the fact, who has since published it in print, told me that in France before the Revolution he had repeatedly seen a woman yoked with an ass to the plough, and the brutal ploughman applying his whip indifferently to either. English people to whom I have occasionally mentioned this as an exponent of the hollow refinement of manners in France have uniformly exclaimed—"*That* is more than I can believe"; and have taken it for granted that I had my information from some prejudiced Englishman. But who was my informer? A Frenchman, reader,—M. Simond,—and, though now by adoption an American citizen, yet still French in his heart and in all his prejudices. [See *ante*, Vol. II, pp. 374-379.—M.]

precipice, at the foot of which he was dashed to pieces. His motive to the "rash act," as the papers called it, was supposed to be mere *tædium vitæ*. But, for my part, I doubted the accuracy of the report. Not long after a case occurred in Westmoreland which strengthened my doubts. A fine young blood horse, who could have no possible reason for making away with himself, unless it were the high price of oats at that time, was found one morning dead in his field. The case was certainly a suspicious one ; for he was lying by the side of a stone-wall, the upper part of which wall his skull had fractured, and which had returned the compliment by fracturing his skull. It was argued, therefore, that, in default of ponds, &c., he had deliberately hammered with his head against the wall : this, at first, seemed the only solution ; and he was generally pronounced *felo de se*. However, a day or two brought the truth to light. The field lay upon the side of a hill ; and, from a mountain which rose above it, a shepherd had witnessed the whole catastrophe, and gave evidence which vindicated the character of the horse. The day had been very windy ; and the young creature, being in high spirits, and caring evidently as little for the corn question as for the bullion question, had raced about in all directions, and at length, descending too steep a part of the field, had been unable to check himself, and was projected by the impetus of his own descent like a battering ram against the wall.

Of human suicides, the most affecting I have ever seen recorded is one which I met with in a German book : this I shall repeat a little further on : the most calm and deliberate is the following, which is *said* to have occurred at Keswick, in Cumberland : but I must acknowledge that I never had an opportunity whilst staying at Keswick of verifying the statement.

A young man of studious turn, who is said to have resided near Penrith, was anxious to qualify himself for entering the Church, or for any other mode of life which might secure to him a reasonable portion of literary leisure. His family, however, thought that under the circumstances of his situation he would have a better chance for success in life as a tradesman ; and they took the necessary steps for placing

him as an apprentice at some shopkeeper's in Penrith. This he looked upon as an indignity, to which he was determined in no case to submit. And, accordingly, when he had ascertained that all opposition to the choice of his friends was useless, he walked over to the mountainous district of Keswick (about sixteen miles distant)—looked about him in order to select his ground—coolly walked up Lattrig (a dependency of Skiddaw),—made a pillow of sods,—laid himself down with his face looking up to the sky,—and in that posture was found dead, with the appearance of having died tranquilly.

MODERN SUPERSTITION[1]

It is said continually that the age of the miraculous and supernatural is past. I deny that it is so in any sense which implies this age to differ from all other generations of man except one. It is neither past, nor ought we to wish it past. Superstition is no vice, absolute and unconditional, in the constitution of man. It is or it is not a vice, according to the particular law of its development. It is not true that, in any philosophic view, *primus in orbe deos fecit timor*. As Burke objected—if fear created the gods, what created the fear? Far more true, and more just to the grandeur of man, it would have been to say—*Primus in orbe deos fecit sensus infiniti*. Even for the lowest Caffre, more goes to the sense of a divine being than simply his wrath or his power. Superstition, indeed, in the sense of sympathy with the invisible, is the great test of man's grandeur, as an earthly combining with a celestial. In superstition lies the possibility of religion. And hence the obstinate interfusion of the two ideas in the Roman word *Religio*. And, though superstition is often injurious, degrading, demoralising, it is so, not as a form of corruption or degradation, but as a form of non-development. The crab is harsh, and for itself worthless. But it is the germinal form of innumerable finer fruits. Superstition will finally pass into pure forms of religion as man advances. It would be matter of lamentation to hear that superstition had at all decayed until man had made

[1] Appeared originally in *Blackwood* for April 1840: reprinted by De Quincey in 1854, in vol. iii of his Collective Edition of his Writings.—M.

corresponding steps in the purification and development of his intellect as applicable to religious faith. In order to appreciate the present condition of the supernatural, and its power over man, let us throw a hasty eye over the modes of popular superstition. If these manifest their vitality, it will prove that the popular intellect does not go along with the bookish or the worldly intellect (philosophic we cannot call it) in pronouncing the power of the supernatural extinct. The popular feeling is all in all.

That function of miraculous power which, though widely diffused through Pagan and Christian ages alike, has the least root in the solemnities of the imagination, we may call the *Ovidian*. By way of distinction, it may be so called on a principle of convenience ; and it may be so called on a principle of equity ; since Ovid in his "Metamorphoses" made the first elaborate display of such a tendency in human superstition. It is a movement of superstition under the domination of human affections : a mode of spiritual awe, not remarkably profound, which seeks to reconcile itself with human tenderness or admiration, and which represents supernatural power as expressing itself by a sympathy with human distress or passion concurrently with human sympathies, and as supporting that blended sympathy by a symbol incarnated with the fixed agencies of nature. For instance, a pair of youthful lovers perish by a double suicide originating in a fatal mistake, and a mistake operating in each case through a noble self-oblivion. The tree under which their meeting has been concerted, and which witnesses their tragedy, is supposed ever afterwards to express the divine sympathy with this catastrophe in the gloomy colour of its fruit :—

> " At tu, quæ ramis (arbor !) miserabile corpus
> Nunc tegis unius, mox es tectura duorum,
> Signa tene cædis ; pullosque et luctibus aptos
> Semper habe fructus, gemini monumenta cruoris."

Such is the dying adjuration of the lady to the tree. And the fruit becomes thenceforwards a monument of a double sympathy—sympathy from man, sympathy from a dark power standing behind the agencies of nature and speaking through them. Meantime the object of this sympathy is understood

to be, not the individual catastrophe, but the universal case of unfortunate love exemplified in this particular romance. The inimitable grace with which Ovid has delivered these early traditions of human tenderness blended with human superstition is notorious; the artfulness of the pervading connexion, by which every tale in the long succession is made to arise spontaneously out of that which precedes, is absolutely unrivalled; and this it was, together with his luxuriant gaiety, which procured for him a preference even on the part of Milton—a poet so opposite by intellectual constitution. It is but reasonable, therefore, that this function of the supernatural should bear the name of *Ovidian*. Pagan it was in its birth; and to Paganism its titles ultimately ascend. Yet we know that in the transitional state through the centuries succeeding to Christ, during which Paganism and Christianity were slowly descending and ascending, as if through different strata of the atmosphere, the two powers interchanged whatsoever they could. (See Conyers Middleton; and see Blount of our own days.) It marked the feeble nature of Paganism that it could borrow little or nothing: by organisation it was fitted to no expansion. But the true faith, from its vast and comprehensive adaptation to the nature of man, lent itself to many corruptions (*corruptio optimi est pessima*), some deadly in their tendencies, some harmless. Amongst these last was the Ovidian form of connecting the unseen powers moving in nature with human sympathies of love or reverence. The legends of this kind are universal and endless. No land, the most austere in its Protestantism, but has adopted these superstitions: and everywhere, by those even who reject them, they are entertained with some degree of affectionate respect. That the ass, which in its very degradation still retains an under-power of sublimity,[1] or of sublime suggestion, through its ancient connexion

[1] "*An under-power of sublimity*":—Everybody knows that Homer compared the Telamonian Ajax, in a moment of heroic endurance, to an ass. This, however, was only under a momentary glance from a peculiar angle of the case. But the Mahometan, too solemn, and also perhaps too stupid, to catch the fanciful or shifting and angular colours of things, absolutely by choice, under the Bagdad Caliphate, decorated a most favourite hero with the title of *The Ass*—which title is repeated with veneration to this day. Still it should not be forgotten that the

with the wilderness, with the Orient, with Jerusalem, should have been honoured amongst all animals by the visible impression upon its back of Christian symbols — seems reasonable even to the infantine understanding, when made acquainted with its meekness, its patience, its suffering life, and its association with the Founder of Christianity in one great triumphal solemnity. The very man who brutally abuses it, and feels a hard-hearted contempt for its misery and its submission, has a semi-conscious feeling that the same qualities were possibly those which recommended it to a distinction [1] when all things were valued upon a scale inverse to that of the world. Certain it is that in all Christian lands the legend about the ass is current amongst the rural population. The haddock, again, amongst marine animals, is supposed, throughout all maritime Europe, to be a privileged fish ; even in austere Scotland every child can point out the impression of St. Peter's thumb by which from age to age it is distinguished from fishes having otherwise an external resemblance. To the same apostle (with a reference, doubtless, to St. Matthew, chap. 14, St. Mark, chap. 6, St. Luke, chap. 8, and St. John, chap. 6) is consecrated another memorial of the sea, and of the sea in a state of storm ; viz. that well-known storm-bird which, from the apostle's name *Peter*, is named the stormy *petrel*. All domesticated cattle, having the benefit of man's guardianship and care, are believed (or once *were* believed), throughout England and Germany, to go down upon their knees at one particular moment of Christmas

wild ass is one of the few animals which have the reputation of never flying from an enemy.

[1] "*Which recommended it to a distinction*" :—It might be objected that the oriental ass was often a superb animal ; that it is spoken of prophetically as such ; and that historically the Syrian ass is made known to us as having been used in the prosperous ages of Judea for the riding of princes. But this is no objection. Those circumstances in the history of the ass were requisite to establish its symbolic propriety in a great symbolic pageant of triumph, whilst, on the other hand, the individual animal, there is good reason to think, was marked by all the qualities of the general race as a suffering and unoffending tribe in the animal creation. The asses on which princes rode were of a separate colour, of a peculiar breed, and improved, like the English racer, by continual care. "Speak ye who ride upon *white* asses !" is the scriptural expression : *i.e.* speak ye who are of princely rank.

Eve, when the fields are covered with darkness, when no eye looks down but that of God, and when the exact anniversary hour revolves of that angelic song once rolling over the fields and flocks of Palestine.[1] The Glastonbury Thorn is a mere local superstition; but at one time the legend was as widely diffused as that of Loretto, with the angelic translation of its sanctities: on Christmas morning it was devoutly believed by all Christendom that this holy thorn put forth its annual blossoms. And, with respect to the aspen-tree,—which Mrs. Hemans very naturally mistook for a Welsh legend, having first heard it in Denbighshire, the popular faith is universal,—not Welsh, but European[2]—that it shivers mystically in sympathy with the horror of that mother tree in Palestine which was *compelled* to furnish materials for the cross. Neither would it in this case be any objection if a passage were produced from Solinus or Theophrastus implying that the aspen-tree had always shivered; for the tree might presumably be penetrated by remote presentiments, as well as by remote remembrances. In so vast a case, the obscure sympathy should stretch, Janus-like, each way. And an objection of the same kind to the rainbow, considered as the seal by which God ratified his covenant in bar of all future deluges, may be parried in something of the same way. It was not then first created; optical laws imply that the rainbow must, under pre-conditions of sunshine and rain, always have displayed the same series of phenomena. True: but it was then first selected by preference, amongst a multitude of

[1] Mahometanism, which everywhere pillages Christianity, cannot but have its own face at times glorified by its stolen jewels. This solemn hour of jubilation, gathering even the brutal natures into its fold, recalls accordingly the Mahometan legend (which the reader may remember is one of those incorporated into Southey's "Thalaba") of a great hour revolving once in every year, during which the gates of Paradise were thrown open to their utmost extent, and gales of happiness issued forth upon the total family of man.

[2] "*European*":—Or, more strictly speaking, co-extensive with Christendom, which is *now* a much wider expression; for, whilst less than two millions are to be subtracted on account of the Ottoman Mussulmans, two millions must be added on account of Asiatics (viz. the Armenians, &c.), twenty-two millions for the United States, two millions for Canada and other English possessions, seven or eight millions for Spanish and Portuguese America.

natural signs as yet unappropriated, and then first charged with the new function of a message and a promise to man. Pretty much the same theory—that is, the same way of accounting for the natural existence without disturbing the supernatural functions—may be applied to the great constellation of the other hemisphere, called the Southern Cross. It is viewed popularly in South America as the great banner, or gonfalon, held aloft by heaven before the Spanish heralds of the true faith in 1492. To that superstitious and ignorant race it costs not an effort to suppose that, by some synchronising miracle, the constellation had been then specially called into existence at the very moment when the first Christian procession, bearing a cross in their arms, solemnly stepped on shore from the vessels of Christendom. We Protestants know better: we understand the impossibility of supposing such a narrow and local reference in orbs so transcendently vast as those composing the constellation—orbs removed from each other by such unvoyageable worlds of space, and having, in fact, no real reference to each other more than to any other heavenly bodies whatsoever. That unity of synthesis by which they are composed into one figure of a cross we know to be a mere accidental result from an arbitrary synthesis of human fancy, and dependent also to a certain extent upon the accidents of our own earthly position and distance. A vast diminution, for example, of this distance, by calling other stars into our field of vision, and by thus filling up the intervals between the several elements of the figure, would disturb (and might even wholly confuse) the present cruciform arrangement. Take such and such stars, compose them into letters, and they will spell such a word. But still it was our own choice, a synthesis of our own fancy, originally to combine them in this way. They might be divided from each other, and otherwise combined. All this is true: and yet, as the combination, though in a partial sense arbitrary, does spontaneously offer itself[1] to every eye, as the glorious cross

[1] "*Does spontaneously offer itself*":—Heber (Bishop of Calcutta) complains that this constellation is not composed of stars answering his expectation in point of magnitude. But he admits that the dark barren space around it gives to this inferior magnitude a very advantageous relief.

does really glitter for ever through the silent hours of a vast hemisphere, even they who are not superstitious may willingly yield to the belief that, as the rainbow was laid in the very elements and necessities of nature, yet still bearing a prededication to a service which would not be called for until many ages had passed, so also the mysterious cipher of man's imperishable hopes may have been entwined and enwreathed with the starry heavens from their earliest creation, as a prefiguration—as a silent heraldry of mysterious hope through one period, and as a heraldry of gratitude through the other.

These cases which I have been rehearsing, taking them in the fullest literality, agree in this general point of union: they are all silent incarnations of miraculous power—miracles, supposing them to have been such originally, locked up and embodied in the regular course of nature, just as we see lineaments of faces and of forms in petrifactions, in variegated marbles, in spars or in rocky strata, which our fancy interprets as once having been real human existences, but which are now confounded with the very substance of a mineral product.[1] Even those who are most superstitious, therefore, look upon cases of this order as occupying a midway station between the physical and the hyperphysical, between the regular course of nature and the providential interruption of that course. The stream of the miraculous is here confluent with the stream of the natural. By such legends the credulous man finds his superstition but little evoked, the incredulous finds his philosophy but little revolted. Both alike will be willing to admit, for instance, that the apparent act of reverential thanksgiving, in certain birds, when drinking, is caused and supported by a physiological arrangement; and yet, perhaps, both alike would bend so far to the legendary faith as to allow a child to believe, and would perceive a pure child-like beauty in believing, that the bird was thus rendering a homage of deep thankfulness to the universal Father, who watches for the safety of sparrows, and sends his rain upon the just and upon the unjust. In short, the faith in

[1] See upon this subject some interesting speculations (or at least dim outlines and suggestions of speculations) by the German author Novalis (the Graf von Hardenberg). [Carlyle's Essay on Novalis may suffice in this reference.—M.]

this order of the physico-miraculous is open alike to the sceptical and the non-sceptical: it is touched superficially with the colouring of superstition, with its tenderness, its humility, its thankfulness, its awe; but, on the other hand, it is not therefore tainted with its coarseness, with its childishness, with its paralytic credulity. In no subject is the difference between the childish and the child-like more touchingly brought forward than occasionally in the religious legends of early and of militant Christianity. Such a faith reposes upon the universal signs diffused through nature, and blends with the mysterious of natural grandeurs wherever found—with the mysterious of the starry heavens, with the mysterious of music, and with that infinite form of the mysterious for man's dimmest misgivings

"Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns."

But, from this earliest note in the ascending scale of superstitious faith, let us pass to a more alarming key. This first, which I have styled (in equity as well as for distinction) the *Ovidian*, is too aerial, almost too allegoric, to be susceptible of much terror. It is the mere *fancy*, in a mood half-playful, half-tender, which submits to the belief. It is the feeling, the sentiment, which creates the faith; not the faith which creates the feeling. And thus far we see that modern feeling and Christian feeling has been to the full as operative as any that is peculiar to Paganism; judging by the Romish *Legenda*, much more so. The Ovidian illustrations, under a false superstition, are entitled to give the designation, as being the first, the earliest, but not at all as the richest. Besides that Ovid's illustrations emanated often from himself individually, not from the popular mind of his country; whereas ours of the same class uniformly repose on large popular traditions from the whole of Christian antiquity. These again are agencies of the supernatural which can never have a private or personal application; they belong to all mankind and to all generations. But the next in order are more solemn; they become terrific by becoming personal. These comprehend all that vast body of the marvellous which is expressed by

the word *Ominous*. On this head, as dividing itself into the ancient and modern, I will speak next.

Everybody is aware of the deep emphasis which the Pagans laid upon words and upon names, under this aspect of the ominous. The name of several places was formally changed by the Roman government, solely with a view to that contagion of evil which was thought to lurk in the syllables, if taken significantly. Thus, the town of Maleventum (Ill-come, as one might render it) had its name changed by the Romans to Beneventum (or Welcome). *Epidamnum*, again, the Grecian Calais, as one might call it, in relation to the Roman Dover of Brundusium, was a name that would have startled the stoutest-hearted Roman "from his propriety." Had he suffered this name to escape him inadvertently, his spirits would have forsaken him: he might even have pined away under dim misgivings of evil, like a poor negro of Koromantyn who is the victim of Obi.[1] Read into a Greek word, which it really was, the name imported no ill; but for a Roman to say *Ibo Epidamnum*, reading the word *damnum* into a Roman sense, was in effect saying, though in a hybrid dialect, half-Greek, half-Roman, "I will go to ruin." The name was therefore changed to Dyrrachium; a substitution which quieted more anxieties in Roman hearts than the erection of a light-house or the deepening of the harbour mouth. A case equally strong, to take one out of many hundreds that have come down to us, is reported by Livy. There was an officer in a Roman legion, at some period of the republic, who bore the name either of Atrius Umber or Umbrius Ater: and, this man being ordered on some expedition, the soldiers refused to follow him. They did right. I remember, and have elsewhere mentioned,[2] that Coleridge used facetiously to call the well-known sister of Dr. Aikin, Mrs. Barbauld, "that pleonasm of nakedness," the idea of nakedness being reduplicated and reverberated in the *bare* and the *bald*. This

[1] "*The victim of Obi*":—It seems worthy of notice that this magical fascination is generally called Obi, and the magicians Obeah men, throughout Guinea, Negroland, &c.; whilst the Hebrew or Syriac word for the rites of necromancy was *Ob* or *Obh*, at least when ventriloquism was concerned.

[2] See *ante*, Vol. I, p. 127, footnote.—M.

Atrius Umber might be called "that pleonasm of darkness"; and one might say to him, in the words of Othello, "What needs this iteration?" To serve under the Gloomy was enough to darken the spirit of hope; but to serve under the Black Gloomy was really rushing upon destruction. Yet it may be alleged that Captain Death was a favourite and heroic leader in the English navy, and that, in our own times, Admiral Coffin, though an American by birth, has not been unpopular in the same service. This is true: and all that can be said is that these names were two-edged swords, which might be made to tell against the enemy as well as against friends. And possibly the Roman centurion might have turned his name to the same account, had he possessed the great Dictator's presence of mind; for he, the mighty Julius, when landing in Africa, having happened to stumble—an omen of the worst character in Roman estimation—took out its sting by following up his own oversight as if it had been intentional, putting his lips to the ground, kissing it, and ejaculating that in this way he appropriated the soil.

Omens of every class were certainly regarded in ancient Rome with a reverence that can hardly be surpassed. But yet, with respect to those omens derived from names, it is certain that our modern times have more memorable examples on record. Out of a large number which occur to me, I will cite two:—The present[1] King of the French bore in his boyish days a title which he would not have borne but for an omen of bad augury attached to his proper title. Before the death of his father *Egalité* had raised him to the princely honours of Orleans, his own proper title had been *Duc de Valois*. Why then was he not openly so styled? The reason lay in a secret omen of evil connected with that title, and communicated only to a few friends of that great house. The story is thus told:—The father of that famous Regent Orleans who governed France during the minority of Louis XV was the sole brother of Louis Quatorze. He married for his first wife our English princess Henrietta, the sister of Charles II (and through her daughter, by the way, it is that

[1] "*Present*":—This was written, I believe, about 1839. [In 1840.—M.]

the house of Savoy *i.e.* of Sardinia, has pretensions to the English throne). This unhappy lady, it is too well established, was poisoned. Voltaire, amongst many others, has affected to doubt the fact; for which in his time there might be some excuse. But since then better evidences have placed the matter beyond all question. We now know both the fact, and the how and the why. The duke, who *possibly* was no party to the murder of his young wife, though otherwise on bad terms with her, married for his second wife a coarse German princess, homely in every sense, and a singular contrast to the elegant creature whom he had lost. She was a daughter of the Bavarian Elector; ill-tempered by her own confession, self-willed, and a plain speaker to excess; but otherwise a woman of honest German integrity. Unhappy she was through a long life; unhappy through the monotony as well as the malicious intrigues of the French Court; and so much so that she did her best (though without effect) to prevent her Bavarian niece from becoming dauphiness. She acquits her husband, however, in the memoirs which she left behind, of any intentional share in her unhappiness, and describes him constantly as a well-disposed prince. But, whether it were that, often walking in the dusk of evening through the numerous apartments of that vast mansion which her husband had so much enlarged, naturally she turned her thoughts to that injured English lady who had presided there before herself, or whether it arose from the inevitable gloom which broods continually over mighty palaces, so much is known for certain, that one evening, in the twilight, she met at a remote quarter of the reception-rooms something or other that she took for a spiritual apparition. What she fancied to have passed in this interview with the apparition was never known except to her nearest friends; and, if she made any explanations in her memoirs, the editor has thought fit to suppress them. All that transpired was that some ominous revelation was then made with respect to the title of *Valois*, which was the proper second title of the Orleans family, and that, in consequence of this communication, her son, the Regent, had assumed in his boyhood that of Duc de Chartres. His elder brother was dead, so that the superior title was open to him; but, in consequence of those mysterious omens,

whatever they might be, which occasioned much whispering at the time, the great title of Valois was laid aside for ever as of bad augury ; nor has it ever been resumed through a century and a-half that have followed that mysterious warning ; nor will it be resumed, unless the numerous children of the present Orleans branch should find themselves distressed for ancient titles,—which is not likely, since they enjoy the honours of the elder house, as well as of their own, and are now (1839) the *Children of France* in the amplest and most privileged sense.

Here we have a great European case of state omens in the eldest of Christian houses. The next which I shall cite is equally a state case, and carries its public verification along with itself. In the spring of 1799, when Napoleon was lying before Acre, he became anxious for news from Upper Egypt, whither he had despatched Dessaix in pursuit of a distinguished Mameluke leader. This was in the middle of May. Not many days after, a courier arrived with favourable dispatches—favourable in the main, but reporting one tragical occurrence on a small scale, that to Napoleon, for a superstitious reason, outweighed the public prosperity. A *djerme*, or Nile boat of the largest class, having on board a large party of troops and of wounded men, together with most of a regimental band, had run ashore at the village of Benouth. No case could be more hopeless. The neighbouring Arabs belonged to the Yambo tribe—of all Arabs the most ferocious. These Arabs and the Fellahs (whom, by the way, many of our countrymen are so ready to represent as friendly to the French and hostile to ourselves) had taken the opportunity of attacking the vessel. The engagement was obstinate ; but at length the inevitable catastrophe could be delayed no longer. The commander, an Italian named Morandi, was a brave man ; any fate appeared better than that which awaited him from an enemy so malignant. He set fire to the powder magazine ; the vessel blew up ; Morandi perished ; and all of less nerve, who had previously reached the shore in safety, were put to death to the very last man, with cruelties the most detestable, by their inhuman enemies. For all this Napoleon cared little ; but one solitary fact there was in the report which struck him with secret alarm. This

ill-fated *djerme*—what was it called? It was called *L'Italie*; and in the name of the vessel Napoleon read an augury of the fate which had befallen the Italian territory. Considered as a dependency of France, he felt certain that Italy was lost; and Napoleon was inconsolable. But what possible connexion, it was asked, can exist between this vessel on the Nile and a remote Peninsula of Southern Europe? "No matter," replied Napoleon; "my presentiments never deceive me. You will see that all is ruined. I am satisfied that my Italy, my conquest, is lost to France!" So, indeed, it was. All European news had long been intercepted by the English cruisers; but immediately after the French victory over the Vizier in July 1799 an English admiral first informed the French army of Egypt that Massena and others had lost all that Bonaparte had won in 1796. It is, however, a strange illustration of human blindness that this very subject of Napoleon's lamentation—this very Italian campaign of 1799—it was, with its blunders and its long equipage of disasters, that paved the way for his own elevation to the Consulship, just seven calendar months from the receipt of that Egyptian dispatch; since, most certainly, in the struggle of Brumaire 1799, doubtful and critical through every stage, it was the pointed contrast between his own Italian campaigns and those of his successors which gave effect to Napoleon's pretensions and which procured them a ratification amongst the people. The loss of Italy—that loss which so much disturbed him in Syria—was essential to the full effect of Napoleon's previous conquest. By anything short of that temporary eclipse for France no adequate contrast between himself and his rivals would have been established for Napoleon; no opening would have been made for Marengo in the summer of 1800. That and the imbecile characters of Napoleon's chief military opponents were the true keys to the great revolution of Brumaire. The stone which he rejected became the keystone of the arch. So that, after all, he *valued* the omen falsely; though the very next news from Europe, courteously communicated by his English enemies, showed that he had *read* its immediate *interpretation* rightly.

These omens, derived from names, are therefore common to the ancient and the modern world. But perhaps, in strict

logic, they ought to have been classed as one subdivision or variety under a much larger head; viz. words generally, no matter whether proper names or appellatives, viewed as operative powers and agencies, — bearing, that is to say, a charmed power against some party concerned from the moment that they leave the lips.

Homer describes prayers as having a separate life, rising buoyantly upon wings, and making their way upwards to the throne of Jove. Such, but in a sense more gloomy and terrific, is the force ascribed under a wide-spread superstition, ancient and modern, to words uttered on critical occasions, or to words uttered at any time which point to critical occasions. Hence the doctrine of *ευφημισμος*, the necessity of abstaining from strong words or direct words in expressing fatal contingencies. *Favete linguis*—favour me with your tongues, give me the benefit of your propitious voices—was a standing request in Pagan days. It was shocking, at all times of Paganism, to say of a third person—"If he should die," or to suppose the case that he might be murdered. The very word *death* was consecrated and forbidden; *i.e.* was tabooed. *Si quiddam humanum passus fuerit* was the extreme form to which men advanced in such cases. And this scrupulous feeling, originally founded on the supposed efficacy of words, prevails to this day. It is a feeling undoubtedly supported by good taste which strongly impresses upon us all the discordant tone of any impassioned subjects (death, religion, &c.) with the common key of ordinary conversation. But good taste is not in itself sufficient to account for a scrupulousness so general and so austere. In the lowest classes there is a shuddering recoil still felt from uttering coarsely and roundly the anticipation of a person's death. Suppose a child, heir to some great estate, the subject of conversation—the hypothesis of his death is put cautiously, under such forms as "If anything but good should happen," "if any change should occur," "if any of us should chance to miscarry," and so forth. Always a modified expression is sought—always an indirect one. And this timidity arises under the old superstition still lingering amongst men, like that ancient awe, noticed by Wordsworth, for the sea and its tremendous secrets —feelings that have not, no, nor ever will, become entirely

obsolete. No excess of nautical skill will ever perfectly disenchant the great abyss from its terrors; no progressive knowledge will ever medicine that dread misgiving of a mysterious and pathless power given to words of a certain import, or uttered in certain situations: by a parent, for instance, to persecuting or insulting children; by the victim of horrible oppression, when labouring in final agonies [1]; and by others, whether cursing or blessing, who stand central to great passions, to great interests, or to great perplexities.

And here, by way of parenthesis, I might stop to attempt an explanation of the force attached to that scriptural expression, "*Thou hast said it.*" It is an answer adopted by our Saviour; and the meaning seems radically to be this: the popular belief authorised the notion that simply to have uttered any great thesis, though unconsciously,—simply to have united verbally any two great ideas, though for a purpose the most different or even opposite,—had the mysterious power of realising them in act. An exclamation, though in the purest spirit of sport, addressed to a boy, "*You shall be our imperator,*" was many times supposed to be the forerunner and fatal mandate for the boy's elevation. Words that were blind, and words that were torn from frantic depths of anguish, oftentimes, it was thought, executed themselves. To connect, though but for denial or for mockery, the ideas of Jesus and the Messiah—as, *e.g.*, *Art thou the Christ, or the Anointed?*—furnished an augury of their eventual coincidence. It was an *argumentum ad hominem*, and drawn from a popular faith.

But a modern reader will object the want of an accompanying design or serious intention on the part of him who utters the words: he never meant his words to be taken seriously—nay, his purpose was the very opposite. True: and precisely *that* is the reason why his words are likely to operate effectually, and why they should be feared. Here lies the critical point which most of all distinguishes this faith. Words took effect, not merely in default of a serious use, but exactly in consequence of that default. It was the chance

[1] As, for example, in that mysterious poem of Horace where a dying boy points the fulminations of his dying words against the witch that presides over his tortures. [Horace, Epode V.—M.]

word, the stray word, the word uttered in jest, or in trifling, or in scorn, or unconsciously, which took effect; whilst ten thousand words uttered with purpose and deliberation were sure to prove inert. One case will illustrate this:—Alexander the Great, in the outset of his Persian expedition, consulted the oracle at Delphi. For the sake of his army, had he been even without personal faith, he desired to have his enterprise grandly authorised. No persuasions, however, would move the priestess to enter upon her painful and agitating duties for the sake of obtaining the regular answer of the god. Wearied with this, Alexander seized the great lady by the arm; and, using as much violence as was becoming to the two characters—of a great prince acting, and a great priestess suffering—he pushed her gently backwards to the tripod on which, in her professional character, it was requisite that she should be seated. Instantly and spontaneously, in the hurry and excitement of the moment, the priestess exclaimed, Ω παι, ἀνικητος εἰ—*O son, thou art irresistible;* never adverting for an instant to his martial purposes in the future, but simply to his present personal importunities at the moment. The person whom she thought of as incapable of resistance was not Darius, the great King of Susa and Persepolis, of Ecbatana, and Babylon, and Sardis, but her own womanly self; and all she meant *consciously* was—O son, I can refuse nothing to one so earnest. But mark what followed: Alexander desisted at once—he asked for no further oracle—he refused it, and exclaimed joyously: "Now then, noble priestess, farewell; I have the oracle, I have your answer, and better than any which you could deliver from the tripod. I am invincible, I am irresistible: so you have declared; you cannot revoke it. True, you thought not of Persia—you thought only of my importunity. But that very fact is what ratifies your answer. In its blindness I recognise its truth. An oracle from a god might be distorted by political ministers of the god, as in time past too often has been suspected. The oracle was said of old to *Medise*, and in my own father's time to *Philippise*. But an oracle delivered unconsciously, indirectly, blindly, that is the oracle which cannot deceive." Such was the all-famous oracle which Alexander extorted; such was the oracle on which he

and his army relying went forth "conquering and to conquer."

Exactly on this principle do the Turks act in putting so high a value on the words of idiots. Enlightened Christians at one time wondered, but have long ceased to wonder, at their allowing any weight to people bereft of understanding. *That* is the very reason for allowing them weight: that very defect it is which makes them capable of being organs for conveying words from higher intelligences. A fine human intelligence cannot be a passive instrument—it cannot be a mere tube for conveying the words of inspiration: such an intelligence will intermingle ideas of its own, or will otherwise modify what is given and pollute what is sacred.

It is also on this principle that the whole practice and doctrine of sortilegy rest. Let us confine ourselves to that mode of sortilegy which is conducted by throwing open privileged books at random, and thus leaving to chance, or else (which was a variety in the practice often resorted to by Haydon the painter) throwing such books open in the dark, and leaving to the morning light the revelation of the silent oracle which lurked in the passage first catching the eye. The books used have varied with the caprice or the error of ages. Once the Hebrew Scriptures had the preference. Probably they were laid aside not because the reverence for their authority decayed, but because it increased so as to awaken in some minds a scrupulous sense of profanation in such a use of the sacred text. In later times Virgil has been the favourite. Considering the very limited range of ideas to which Virgil was tied by his theme—a colonising expedition in a barbarous age—no worse book could have been selected.[1] So little indeed does the "Æneid" exhibit of

[1] "*No worse book could have been selected*":—The probable reason for making so unhappy a choice seems to have been that Virgil in the middle ages had the character of a necromancer, a diviner, &c. This we all know from Dante. Now, the original reason for this strange translation of character and functions I hold to have arisen from the circumstance of his maternal grandfather having borne the name of *Magus*. People in those ages held that a powerful enchanter must have a magician, not amongst his *agnati*, but amongst his *cognati*; the power must run in the blood, which on the maternal side could be undeniably ascertained. Under this preconception, they took Magus

human life in its multiformity that much tampering with the plain sense of the text is required to bring real cases of human interest and real situations within the scope of any Virgilian response, though aided by the utmost latitude of accommodation. A king, a soldier, a sailor, &c., might look for correspondences to their own circumstances. Accordingly, everybody remembers the dreadful answer which Charles I. received at Oxford from this mode of sortilegy at the opening of the Parliamentary War.[1] But, beyond these broad obvious

not for a proper name, but for a professional designation. Amongst many illustrations of the magical character sustained by Virgil in the middle ages, we may mention that a writer about the year 1200, or the era of our own Robin Hood, published by Montfaucon, says of Virgil, "*Captus a Romanis, invisibiliter exiit ivitque Neapolim.*"

[1] The story is that Charles, being in the Bodleian at Oxford, where he was shown a splendidly bound copy of Virgil, was induced by Lord Falkland to amuse himself with an experiment in the *Sortes Virgilianæ*, with the result that the passage in the Æneid which he turned up was Dido's tremendous imprecation on Æneas, iv. 612-620 :—

"Si tangere portus
Infandum caput, ac terris adnare necesse est ;
Et sic fata Jovis poscunt, hic terminus hæret ;
At bello audacis populi vexatus et armis,
Finibus extorris, complexu avulsus Iuli,
Auxilium imploret, videatque indigna suorum
Funera ; nec, cum se sub leges pacis iniquæ
Tradiderit, regno aut optata luce fruatur ;
Sed cadat ante diem mediaque inhumatus arena."

In Dryden's translation the passage runs thus :—

"If so the Fates ordain, and Jove commands
The ungrateful wretch should find the Latian lands,
Yet let a race untamed and haughty foes
His peaceful entrance with dire arms oppose ;
Oppressed with numbers on the unequal field,
His men discouraged, and himself expelled,
Let him for succour sue from place to place,
Torn from his subjects, and his son's embrace.
First let him see his friends in battle slain,
And their untimely fate lament in vain ;
And, when at length the cruel war shall cease,
On hard conditions may he buy his peace :
Nor let him then enjoy supreme command,
But fall untimely by some hostile hand,
And lie unburied on the barren sand."

categories, and a very few subdivisions lying within them, it is vain to look for any reasonable compass of discrimination in the oracles of Virgil. Indeed, it was this very limitation in the Virgilian range of ideas, when the case itself imposed a vast Shaksperian breadth of speculation,—a field of vision like that on which the Fiend may be supposed to have planted Christ when showing to him all the kingdoms of the earth, —that eventually threw back the earnest inquiries into futurity upon the *Sortes Biblicæ*. No case, indeed, can try so severely, or put upon record so conspicuously, this indestructible propensity for looking into the future by the aid of dice, real or figurative, as the fact of men eminent for piety having yielded to the temptation. I pause to give one instance—the instance of a person who, in *practical* theology, although a narrow dissenter, has been perhaps more popular than any other in any Church. Dr. Doddridge, in his earlier days, was in a dilemma both of conscience and of taste as to the election he should make between two situations,—one in possession, both at his command. He was settled at Harborough, in Leicestershire, and was "pleasing himself with the view of a continuance" in that situation. True, he had received an invitation to Northampton; but the reasons against complying seemed so strong that nothing was wanting beyond the civility of going over to Northampton and making an apologetic farewell. Accordingly, on the last Sunday in November of the year 1729, the doctor went and preached a sermon in conformity with those purposes. "But," says he, "on the morning of that day an incident happened which affected me greatly." On the night previous, it seems, he had been urged very importunately by his Northampton friends to undertake the vacant office. Much personal kindness had concurred with this public importunity: the good doctor was affected; he had prayed fervently, alleging in his prayer, as the reason which chiefly weighed with him to reject the offer, that it was far beyond his forces, and mainly

The sequel of the story is that Falkland, horrified at the misadventure, tried to remove the impression by consulting the book on his own account, on the chance of something more cheerful, but only made matters worse by hitting on the passage "*Non hæc, O Palla*," &c. (Æneid, xi. 152-158), prophesying so distinctly his own death.—M.

because he was too young[1] and had no assistant. He goes on thus: "As soon as ever this address" (meaning the prayer) "was ended, I passed through a room of the house in which "I lodged, where a child was reading to his mother, and the "only words I heard distinctly were these, *And, as thy days, "so shall thy strength be.*" This singular coincidence between his own difficulty and a scriptural line caught at random in passing hastily through a room (but, observe, a line insulated from the context and placed in high relief to his ear), shook his resolution. Accident co-operated; a promise to be fulfilled at Northampton in a certain contingency fell due at the instant; the doctor was detained; the detention gave time for further representations; new motives arose; old difficulties were removed; and finally the doctor saw, in all this succession of steps (the first of which, however, lay in the *Sortes Biblicæ*), clear indications of a providential guidance. With that conviction he took up his abode at Northampton, and remained there for the next thirty-one years, until he left it for his grave at Lisbon; in fact, he passed at Northampton the whole of his public life. It must, therefore, be allowed to stand upon the records of sortilegy that in the main direction of his life—not, indeed, as to its spirit, but as to its form and local connexions—a Protestant divine of much merit, and chiefly in what regards practice, and of the class most opposed to superstition, who himself vehemently combated superstition, took his determining impulse from a variety of the *Sortes Virgilianæ*.

This variety was known in earlier times to the Jews—as early, indeed, as the era of the Grecian Pericles, if we are to believe the "Talmud." It is known familiarly to this day amongst Polish Jews, and is called *Bath-col*, or *the daughter-voice*; the meaning of which appellation is this:—The *Urim and Thummim*, or oracle in the breastplate of the High Priest, spoke directly from God. It was, therefore, the original, or mother-voice. But, about the time of Pericles—that is, about

[1] "*Because he was too young*":—Dr. Doddridge was born in the summer of 1702: consequently he was at this era of his life about twenty-seven years old, and not so obviously entitled to the excuse of youth. But he pleaded his youth not with a view to the exertions required, but to the *auctoritas* and responsibilities of the situation.

one hundred years before the time of Alexander the Great—the light of prophecy was quenched in Malachi or Haggai, and the oracular jewels in the breastplate became simultaneously dim. Henceforwards the mother-voice was heard no longer; but to this succeeded an imperfect or daughter-voice (*Bath-col*), which lay in the first words happening to arrest the attention at a moment of perplexity. An illustration which has been often quoted from the Talmud is to the following effect:—Rabbi Jochannan and Rabbi Simeon Ben Lachish were anxious about a friend, Rabbi *Samuel*, six hundred miles distant on the Euphrates. Whilst talking earnestly together on this subject in Palestine, they passed a school; they paused to listen: it was a child reading the first book of Samuel; and the words which they caught were these—*And Samuel died.* These words they received humbly and sorrowfully as a *Bath-col*; and the next horseman from the East brought word accordingly that Rabbi Samuel had been gathered to his fathers at some station on the Euphrates.

Here is the very same case, the same *Bath-col* substantially, which I have cited from Orton's "Life of Doddridge." And Du Cange himself notices, in his Glossary, the relation which this bore to the Pagan *Sortes.* "It was," says he, "a "fantastical way of divination, invented by the Jews, not "unlike the *Sortes Virgilianæ* of the heathens. For, as "with them the first words they happened to dip into in "the works of that poet became a kind of oracle whereby "they predicted future events, so, with the Jews, when they "appealed to *Bath-col*, the first words they heard from any "one's mouth were looked upon as a voice from Heaven "directing them in the matter they inquired about."

Such is *verbatim* the report of Du Cange on this matter; and, if from any of its expressions the reader should be disposed to infer that this ancient form of the practical miraculous is at all gone out of use, even the example of Dr. Doddridge may satisfy him to the contrary. Such an example was sure to authorise a large imitation. But, even apart from that, the superstition is common. The records of conversion amongst felons and other ignorant persons might be cited, by hundreds upon hundreds, to prove that no practice is more common than that of trying the spiritual

fate and abiding by the import of any passage in the Scriptures which may first present itself to the eye. Cowper the poet has recorded a case of this sort in his own experience. It is one to which all the unhappy are prone. But a mode of questioning the oracles of darkness far more childish, and, under some shape or other, equally common amongst those who are prompted by mere vacancy of mind, without that determination to sacred fountains which is impressed by misery, may be found in the following extravagant silliness of Rousseau, which I give in his own words—a case for which he admits that he himself would have *shut up* any other man (meaning in a lunatic hospital) whom he had seen practising the same absurdities :—

"Au milieu de mes études et d'une vie innocente autant qu'on la puisse mener, et malgré tout ce qu'on m'avoit pu dire, la peur de l'Enfer m'agitoit encore. Souvent je me demandois—En quel état suis-je ? Si je mourrois à l'instant même, *serois-je damné* ? Selon mes Jansenistes [he had been reading the books of the Port Royal], la chose est indubitable : mais, selon ma conscience, il me paroissoit que non. Toujours craintif et flottant dans cette cruelle incertitude, j'avois recours (pour en sortir) aux expédiens les plus risibles, et pour lesquels je ferois volontiers enfermer un homme, si je lui en voyois faire autant. Un jour, rêvant à ce triste sujet, je m'exerçois machinalement à lancer des pierres contre les troncs des arbres, et cela avec mon adresse ordinaire, c'est-à dire sans presque en toucher aucun. Tout au milieu de ce bel exercise, je m'avisai de m'en faire une espéce de pronostic pour calmer mon inquiétude. Je me dis, Je m'en vais jeter cette pierre contre l'arbre qui est vis-a-vis de moi : si je le touche, signe de salut : si je le manque, signe de damnation. Tout en disant ainsi, je jette ma pierre d'une main tremblante et avec un horrible battement de cœur, mais si heureusement qu'elle va frapper au beau-milieu de l'arbre : ce qui véritablement n'étoit pas difficile : car j'avois eu soin de le choisir fort gros et fort près. *Depuis lors je n'ai plus douté de mon salut.* Je ne sais, en me rappellant ce trait, si je dois rire ou gémir sur moi-même."—*Les Confessions, Partie I. Livre VI.* ["In the midst of my studies and of a life as innocent as it was possible to lead, and in spite of all that could be said to me, the fear of Hell again agitated me. Often I asked myself, In what state am I ? If I should die at this moment, shall I be damned ? According to my Jansenist friends, the thing is indubitable ; but to my conscience it appeared not so. Continually fearful and floating in this cruel uncertainty, I had recourse, for escape, to expedients the most ridiculous, and such as I should willingly have shut up any other person for if I had seen him doing the like. One day, dreaming on this sad subject, I exercised myself mechanically in throwing stones against the trunks of some trees, and this with my usual

dexterity — that is, scarcely ever hitting one of them. In the midst of this fine exercise, it occurred to me to make a sort of prognostic for calming my trouble. I said to myself,—I shall throw this stone at that tree which is directly opposite me: if I touch it, sign of salvation; if I miss, sign of damnation. So saying, I threw my stone with a trembling hand and a horrible beating of the heart, but so happily that it hit the tree right in the middle: not a difficult matter truly; for I had taken care to choose a very big and very near one. *Since then I have had no more doubt of my salvation.* I know not, in recalling this incident, whether I ought to laugh or be ashamed of myself."—*Confessions, Part I. Book VI.*]

Now, really, if Rousseau thought fit to try such tremendous appeals by taking a "shy" at any random object, he should have governed his sortilege (for such it may be called) with something more like equity. Fair play is a jewel; and in such a case a man is supposed to play against an adverse party hid in darkness. To shy at a cow within six feet distance gives no chance at all to his dark antagonist. A pigeon rising from a trap at a suitable distance might be thought a *sincere* staking of the interest at issue; but, as to the massy stem of a tree "fort gros et fort près," the sarcasm of a Roman emperor applies, that to miss under such conditions implied an original genius for missing, so that to hit, as it involved no risk, was no honest trial of the case. After all, the sentimentalist had youth to plead in apology for this extravagance. He was hypochondriacal; he was in solitude; and he was possessed by gloomy imaginations from the works of a society in the highest public credit. But most readers will be aware of similar appeals to the mysteries of Providence, made in public by well-known sectarians, speaking from the solemn station of a pulpit. I forbear to quote cases of this nature, though really existing in print, because I feel that the profaneness of such anecdotes is more revolting and more painful to pious minds than the absurdity is amusing. Meantime it must not be forgotten that the principle concerned, though it may happen to disgust men when associated with ludicrous circumstances, is, after all, the very same which has latently governed very many modes of ordeal, or judicial inquiry, and which has been adopted as a moral rule or canon equally by the blindest of the Pagans, the most fanatical of the Jews, and

the most enlightened of the Christians. It proceeds upon the assumption that man by his actions puts a question to Heaven, and that Heaven answers by the event. Lucan, in a well-known passage, takes it for granted that the cause of Cæsar had the approbation of the gods. But why? Simply from the event. Notoriously it was the triumphant cause. It was victorious. It was the "*victrix* causa"; and, *as* such, simply because it was "victrix," it had a right in his eyes to postulate the divine favour as mere matter of necessary inference: whilst, on the other hand, the *victa causa*, though it seemed to Lucan sanctioned and consecrated by human virtue in the person of Cato, stood, as regarded heavenly verdicts, unappealably condemned.[1] This mode of reasoning may strike the reader as merely Pagan. Not at all. In England, at the close of the Parliamentary War, it was generally argued that Providence had decided the question against the Royalists by the mere fact of the issue. Milton himself, with all his high-toned morality, uses this argument as irrefragable[2]; which is odd, were it only on this account —that the issue ought necessarily to have been held for a very considerable time as merely provisional, and liable to be set aside by possible counter-issues through one generation at the least.[3] But the capital argument against such doc-

[1] *Victrix causa Deis placuit, sed victa Catoni* [*Pharsal*, i. 128]: that cause which triumphed approved itself to the gods; but, in retaliation, the vanquished cause approved itself to Cato. Perhaps, in all human experience, in books or in colloquial intercourse, there never was so grand, so awful a compliment paid to an individual as this of Lucan's to Cato; nor, according to my own judgment, one so entirely misplaced. One solitary individual, in his single person, is made to counterpoise by weight of *auctoritas* and power of sanction the entire Pantheon. The Julian cause might have seemed the better, for it won the favour of Heaven. But no! The Pompeian must have been the better, for it won the favour of Cato!

[2] In several of his Republican pamphlets.—M.

[3] And in fact not merely *liable* to be set aside, but *actually* set aside in 1660 by the Restoration. This reversal was again partially reversed, or at least to a great extent virtually reversed, by the Revolution of 1688-9: upon which great event the true judgment, too little perceived by English historians, is that, for the most part, it was a re-affirmation of the principles contended for by the Long Parliament in the Parliamentary War. But this final verdict Milton did not live to see, or even dimly to anticipate.

trine is to be found in the New Testament. Strange that Milton should overlook, and strange that moralists in general have overlooked, the sudden arrest given to this dangerous (but most prevalent) mode of reasoning by the Founder of our faith. He first, he last, taught to his astonished disciples the new truth—at that time the astounding truth—that no relation exists between the immediate practical events of things on the one side and divine verdicts on the other. There was no presumption, for instance, against a man's favour with God, or that of his parents, because he happened to be afflicted to extremity with bodily disease. There was no shadow of an argument for believing a party of men criminal objects of heavenly wrath because upon them, by fatal preference, a tower had fallen, and because *their* bodies were exclusively mangled. How little can it be said that Christianity has yet developed the fulness of its power, when kings and senates so recently acted under a total oblivion of this great though novel Christian doctrine, and would do so still, were it not that religious arguments have been banished by the progress of taste and the caprices of fashion from the field of political discussion.

But, quitting this province of the ominous where it is made the object of a direct personal inquest, whether by private or by national trials, or by the sortilegy of events, let us throw our eyes over the broader field of omens as they offer themselves spontaneously to those who do not seek, or would even willingly evade, them. There are few of these, perhaps none, which are not universal in their authority, though every land in turn fancies them (like its proverbs) of local authority and origin. The death-watch, for instance, extends from England to Cashmere, and across India to the remotest nook of Bengal. A hare crossing a man's path on starting in the morning has been held in all countries alike to prognosticate evil in the course of that day. Thus, in the "Confessions of a Thug" (which is partially built on a real judicial document, and everywhere conforms to the usages of Hindostan[1]), the hero of the horrid narrative[2] charges some disaster of his own upon

[1] Published in 1840.—M.

[2] "*The hero of the horrid narrative*":—Horrid it certainly is;

having neglected such an omen in the morning. The same belief operated in Pagan Italy. The same omen announced to Lord Lindsay's Arab attendants in the Desert the approach of some disaster, which partially happened in the morning. And a Highlander of the 42d regiment, in his printed memoirs, notices the same harbinger of evil as having crossed his own path on a day of personal disaster in Spain.

Birds are even more familiarly associated with such ominous warnings. This chapter in the great volume of superstition was indeed cultivated with unusual solicitude amongst the Pagans. *Ornithomancy* (or the derivation of omens from the motions of birds) grew into an elaborate science. But, if every rule and distinction upon the number and the position of birds, whether to the right or the left, had been collected from our own village matrons, it would appear that no more of this Pagan science had gone to wreck amongst ourselves than must naturally follow the difference between a believing and a disbelieving government. Magpies are still of awful authority in village life, according to their number, &c.; for a striking illustration of which I may refer the reader to Sir Walter Scott's "Demonology," reported not at second-hand, but from Sir Walter's personal communication with some seafaring fellow-traveller in a stage-coach.[1]

and one incident in every case gives a demoniacal air of coolness to the hellish atrocities—viz. the regular forwarding of the *bheels*, for the purpose of digging the graves. But else the tale tends too much to monotony; and for a reason which ought to have checked the author in carrying on the work to three volumes; namely, that, although there is much dramatic variety in the circumstances of the several cases, there is none in the catastrophes. The brave man and the coward, the erect spirit fighting to the last and the poor creature that despairs from the first—all are confounded in one undistinguishing end by sudden strangulation. This was the original defect of the plan. The sudden surprise, and the scientific noosing as with a Chilian *lasso*, constituted, in fact, the main feature of Thuggee. But, still, the gradual theatrical arrangement of each Thug severally by the side of a victim must often have roused violent suspicion, and that in time to intercept the suddenness of the murder. Now, for the sake of the dramatic effect, this interception ought more often to have been introduced; else the murders are but so many blind surprises as if in sleep. All this might have been managed otherwise.

[1] Since this was first written, Haydon the painter, in his Auto-

Among the ancient stories of the same class is one which I will repeat—having reference to that Herod Agrippa, grandson of Herod the Great, before whom St. Paul made his famous apology at Cæsarea. This Agrippa, overwhelmed by debts, had fled from Palestine to Rome in the latter years of Tiberius. His mother's interest with the widow of Germanicus procured him a special recommendation to her son Caligula. Viewing this child and heir of the lamented Germanicus as the rising sun, Agrippa had been too careless in his language. True, the uncle of Germanicus was the reigning prince; but he was old, and breaking up. True, the son of Germanicus was not yet on the throne; but he soon would be; so that Agrippa was rash enough to call the emperor a *superannuated old fellow*, and even to wish for his death. Sejanus was now dead and gone; but there was no want of spies: and a certain Macro reported his words to Tiberius. Agrippa was in consequence arrested; the Emperor himself condescending to point out the noble Jew to the officer on duty. The case was a gloomy one if Tiberius should happen to survive much longer: and the story of the omen proceeds thus:—"Now, "Agrippa stood in his bonds before the imperial palace, and

biography (i. p. 76), refers to this ancient superstition in terms which I have reason to think inaccurate:—"She [his mother] appeared depressed and melancholy. During the journey, four magpies rose, chattered, and flew away. The singular superstitions about the bird were remembered by us all. I repeated to myself the old saw—'*One for sorrow, two for mirth, three for a wedding, and four for death.*' I tried to deceive my dear mother by declaring that *two were for death, and four for mirth*: but she persisted that four announced death in Devonshire; and, absurd as we felt it to be, we could not shake off the superstition." About three o'clock in the succeeding night Mrs. Haydon died. Meantime, whatever may be the Devonshire version of the old saying, I am assured by a lady that the form current elsewhere is this:—

"One for sorrow;
Two for mirth;
Three for a wedding;
And four for a birth."

And it is clear that the rhyme in the latter reading offers some guarantee for its superior accuracy.

" in his affliction leaned against a certain tree, upon the " boughs of which it happened that a bird had alighted " which the Romans call *bubo*, or the owl. All this was " steadfastly observed by a German prisoner, who asked a " soldier what might be the name and offence of that man " habited in purple. Being told that the man's name was Herod " Agrippa, and that he was a Jew of high rank who had " given a personal offence to the Emperor, the German asked " permission to go near and address him; which being " granted, he spoke thus:—'This disaster, I doubt not, " young man, is trying to your heart; and perhaps you will " not believe me when I announce to you beforehand the " providential deliverance which is impending. However, " this much I will say—and for my sincerity let me appeal " to my native gods as well as to the gods of this Rome, who " have brought us both into trouble—that no selfish object " prompts me to this revelation; for a revelation it is. " Listen. It is fated that you shall not long remain in " chains. Your deliverance will be speedy; and I can " venture to guarantee that you shall be raised to the very " highest rank and power; that you shall be the object of as " much envy as now you are of pity; that you shall retain " your prosperity till death; and that you shall transmit " that prosperity to your children. But——' And there " the German paused. Agrippa was agitated; the bystanders " were attentive; and after a time the German, pointing " solemnly to the bird, proceeded thus:—'But this remem- " ber heedfully—that, when next you see the bird which " now perches above your head, you will only have five days " more to live! This event will be surely accomplished by " that same mysterious god who has thought fit to send the " bird as a warning sign; and you, when you come to your " glory, do not forget me that foreshadowed it in your " humiliation.'" The story adds that Agrippa affected to laugh when the German soldier concluded: after which it goes on to say that, in a few weeks,—being delivered by the death of Tiberius, being released from prison by the very prince on whose account he had incurred the risk, being raised to a tetrarchy, and afterwards to the kingdom of all Judea, coming into all the prosperity which had been pro-

mised to him by the German, and not losing any part of his interest at Rome through the assassination of his patron Caligula,—he began to look back reverentially to the words of the German, and forwards with anxiety to the second coming of the bird. Seven years of sunshine had now slipped away as silently as a dream. A great festival, with public shows and votive offerings, was on the point of being celebrated in honour of Claudius Cæsar at Strato's Tower, otherwise called Cæsarea, which (and not Jerusalem) was the Roman metropolis of Palestine. Duty and policy alike required that the king of the land should go down and unite in this mode of religious homage to the Emperor. He did so; and on the second morning of the festival, by way of doing more conspicuous honour to the great solemnity, he assumed a very sumptuous attire of silver armour, burnished so highly as to throw back a dazzling glare from the sun's morning beams upon the upturned eyes of the vast multitude around him. Immediately from the sycophantish part of the crowd, of whom a vast majority were Pagans, ascended a cry of glorification as to some manifestation of Deity. Agrippa, gratified by this success of his new apparel, and by this flattery, had not the firmness (though a Jew, and conscious of the wickedness, greater in himself than in the heathen crowd) to reject the blasphemous homage. Voices of adoration continued to ascend; when, suddenly looking upward to the vast awnings prepared for screening the audience from the noon-day heats, the king perceived the same ominous bird which he had seen at Rome in the day of his affliction, seated quietly, and looking down upon himself. In that same moment an icy pang shot through his intestines. He was removed into the palace; and, at the end of five days, completely worn out by pain, Agrippa expired, in the fifty-fourth year of his age, and the seventh of his sovereign power.

Whether the bird, here described as an owl, were really such, may be doubted, considering the narrow nomenclature of the Romans for all zoological purposes, and the total indifference of the Roman mind to all distinctions in natural history which are not upon the very largest scale. I myself am greatly disposed to suspect that the bird was a magpie.

Meantime, speaking of ornithoscopy in relation to Jews, I remember another story in that subdivision of the subject which it may be worth while repeating; not merely on its own account, as wearing a fine oriental air, but also for the correction which it suggests to a very common error.

In some period of Syrian warfare, a large military detachment was entering at some point of Syria from the desert of the Euphrates. At the head of the whole array rode two men of some distinction: one was an augur of high reputation; the other was a Jew called Mosollam, a man of admirable beauty, a matchless horseman, unerring as an archer, and accomplished in all martial arts. As they were now first coming within enclosed grounds after a long march in the wilderness, the augur was most anxious to inaugurate the expedition by some impressive omen. Watching anxiously, therefore, he soon saw a bird of splendid plumage perching on a low wall. "Halt!" he said to the advanced guard: and all drew up in a line. At that moment of silence and expectation, Mosollam, slightly turning himself in his saddle, drew his bow-string to his ear: his Jewish hatred of Pagan auguries burned within him; his inevitable shaft went right to its mark, and the beautiful bird fell dead. The augur turned round in fury. But the Jew laughed at him. "This bird, you say, should have furnished us with omens of our future fortunes. And yet, had he known anything of his own, he would never have perched where he did, or have come within the range of Mosollam's archery. How should that bird know *our* destiny, who did not know that it was his own to be shot by Mosollam the Jew?"

Now, this is a common but a most erroneous way of arguing. In a case of this kind, the bird was not supposed to have any *conscious* acquaintance with futurity, either for his own benefit or that of others. But, even where such a consciousness may be supposed, as in the case of oneiromancy, or prophecy by means of dreams, it must be supposed limited, and the more limited in a personal sense as it is illimitable in a sublimer or spiritual sense. Who imagines that, because an Ezekiel foresaw the grand revolutions of the earth, therefore he must or could have foreseen the little details of his own ordinary life? And, even descending from that perfect

inspiration to the more doubtful power of augury amongst the Pagans (concerning which the most eminent of theologians have held very opposite theories), one thing is certain: that, so long as we entertain such pretensions or discuss them at all, we must take them with the principles of those who professed such arts, not with principles of our own arbitrary invention.

One example will make this clear:—There are in England[1] a class of men who practise the Pagan rhabdomancy in a limited sense. They carry a rod or rhabdos (ῥαβδος) of willow: this they hold horizontally; and by the bending of the rod towards the ground they discover the favourable places for sinking wells,—a matter of considerable importance in a province so ill-watered as the northern district of Somersetshire. These people are locally called *jowsers*; and it is probable that from the suspicion with which their art has been usually regarded amongst people of education as the mere legerdemain trick of the professional *Dousterswivel* (see the "Antiquary") is derived the slang word to *chouse* for *swindle*.[2] Meantime, the experimental evidences of a real practical skill in these men, and the enlarged compass of speculation in these days, have led many enlightened people to a stoic ἐποχη, or suspension of judgment, on the reality of this somewhat mysterious art.

Now, in the East, there are men who make the same pretensions in a more showy branch of the art. It is not water,

[1] "*There are in England*":—Especially in Somersetshire, and for twenty miles round Wrington, the birthplace of Locke. Nobody sinks for wells without their advice. I myself knew an amiable Scottish family who, at an estate called Belmaduthie, in memory of a similar property in Ross-shire, built a house in Somersetshire, and resolved to find water without help from the jowser. But, after sinking to a greater depth than ever had been known before, and spending a large sum of money, they were finally obliged to consult the jowser; who found water at once.

[2] Skeat, after Richardson, derives *chouse*, to cheat, from the Turkish word *chaush*, a sergeant or mace-bearer, and traces the introduction of the word into English to a notorious fraud committed in 1609 by a Turkish envoy from the Sultan. He refers, for illustration, to Ben Jonson's *Alchemist*, i. 1; where there is this passage:—"*Dapper*: What do you think of me? that I am a *chiaus*? *Face*: What's that? *Dapper*: The Turk was here. As one would say, Do you think I am a *Turk*?"—M.

but treasures, which they profess to find by some hidden kind of rhabdomancy. The very existence of treasures with us is reasonably considered a thing of improbable occurrence. But in the unsettled East, and with the low valuation of human life wherever Mahometanism prevails, insecurity and other causes must have caused millions of such deposits in every century to have perished as to any knowledge of survivors. The sword has been moving backwards and forwards, for instance, like a weaver's shuttle, since the time of Mahmoud the Ghaznevide[1] in Anno Domini 1000—*i.e.* for eight hundred years—throughout the vast regions bounded by the Tigris, the Oxus, and the Indus. Regularly as it approached, gold and jewels must have sunk by whole harvests into the ground. A certain percentage has been no doubt recovered; but a larger percentage has disappeared for ever. Hence naturally the jealousy of barbarous Orientals that we Europeans, in groping amongst pyramids, sphinxes, and tombs, are looking for buried treasures. The wretches are not so wide astray in what they believe as in what they disbelieve. The treasures do really exist which they fancy; but then also the other treasures in the glorious antiquities have that existence for our sense of beauty which to their brutality is inconceivable. In these circumstances why should it surprise us that men will pursue the science of discovery as a regular trade? Many discoveries of treasure are doubtless made continually which, for obvious reasons, are communicated to nobody. Some proportions there must be between the sowing of such grain as diamonds or emeralds and the subsequent reaping, whether by accident or by art. For, with regard to the last, it is no more impossible, *prima fronte*, that a substance may exist having an occult sympathy with subterraneous water or subterraneous gold than that the magnet should have a sympathy (as yet occult) with the northern pole of our planet.

The first flash of careless thought applied to such a case will suggest that men holding powers of this nature need not

[1] Mahmoud of Ghizni, otherwise Ghuznee, which was so recently taken in one hour by our Indian army under Lord Keane. This Affghan leader was the first Mahometan invader of Hindostan—viz. about the year 1000 of our Christian era.

offer their services for hire to others. And this, in fact, is the objection universally urged by us Europeans as decisive against their pretensions. Their knavery, it is fancied, stands self-recorded; since assuredly they would not be willing to divide their subterranean treasures if they knew of any. Among the fragments still surviving of the Roman poet Ennius is an elegant series of verses in which he expresses this opinion with a fierce tone of mockery for the vulgar disposition to countenance pretensions that seem self-exposed as so manifestly fraudulent. But the men are not in such self-contradiction as might seem. Lady Hester Stanhope, from the ampler knowledge which she had acquired of oriental opinions, set Dr. Madden right on this point.[1] The oriental belief is that a fatality attends the appropriator of a treasure in any case where he happens also to be the discoverer. Such a person, it is held, will die soon and suddenly; so that he is compelled to seek his remuneration from the wages or fees of his employers, not from the treasure itself.

Generally, I may remark that the same practices of subterranean deposits, during our troubled periods in Europe, led to the same superstitions. And it may be added that the same error has arisen in both cases as to some of these superstitions. How often must it have struck people of liberal feelings as a scandalous proof of the preposterous value set upon riches by poor men that ghosts should popularly be supposed to rise and wander for the sake of revealing the situations of buried treasures. For my own part, I have been accustomed to view this popular belief as an argument for pity rather than for contempt towards poor men, as indicating the extreme pressure of that necessity which could so far have demoralised their natural sense of truth and moral proportions. But certainly, in whatever feelings originating, and howsoever excusable in poor men, such popular superstitions as to the motives of ghostly

[1] Lady Hester Stanhope, niece of Pitt, born 1776, left England in 1810, and resided in the east from that time till her death in 1839.—Dr. R. R. Madden, a medical man, published in 1829 *Travels in Egypt, Turkey, Nubia, and Palestine.* Memoirs of Lady Hester Stanhope were published in 1845.—M.

missions did seem to argue a deplorable misconception of the relation subsisting between the spiritual world and the perishable treasures of this perishable world. Yet, when we look into the eastern explanations of this case, we find it subject to a very different reading, and that it is meant to express, not any over-valuation of riches, but the direct contrary passion. A human spirit is punished—such is the notion—in the spiritual world for excessive attachment to gold, by degradation to the office of its guardian; and from this office the tortured spirit can release itself only by revealing the treasure and transferring the custody. It is a penal martyrdom, not an elective passion for gold, which is thus exemplified in the wanderings of a treasure-ghost.

But, in a field where of necessity I am so much limited, I willingly pass from the consideration of these treasure or *khasné* phantoms (which alone sufficiently insure a swarm of ghostly terrors for all oriental ruins of cities) to the same marvellous apparitions as they haunt other solitudes even more awful than those of ruined cities. In this world there are two mighty forms of perfect solitude—the ocean and the desert: the wilderness of the barren sands, and the wilderness of the barren waters. Both are the parents of inevitable superstitions — of terrors, solemn, ineradicable, eternal. Sailors and the children of the desert are alike overrun with spiritual hauntings, from accidents of peril essentially connected with those modes of life, and from the eternal spectacle of the infinite. Voices seem to blend with the raving of the sea, which will for ever impress the feeling of beings more than human; and every chamber of the great wilderness which, with little interruption, stretches from the Euphrates to the western shores of Africa, has its own peculiar terrors both as to sights and sounds. In the wilderness of Zin, between Palestine and the Red Sea, a section of the desert well known in these days to our own countrymen, bells are heard daily pealing for matins or for vespers from some phantom convent that no search of Christian or of Bedouin Arab has ever been able to discover. These bells have sounded since the Crusades. Other sounds,—trumpets, the *Alala* of armies, &c.,—are heard in other regions of the desert. Forms, also, are seen of more people than have any

right to be walking in human paths: sometimes forms of avowed terror; sometimes, which is a case of far more danger, appearances that mimic the shapes of men, and even of friends or comrades. This is a case much dwelt on by the old travellers, and which throws a gloom over the spirits of all Bedouins, and of every cafila or caravan. We all know what a sensation of loneliness or "eeriness" (to use an expressive term of the ballad poetry) arises to any small party assembling in any single room of a vast desolate mansion: how the timid among them fancy continually that they hear some remote door opening, or trace the sound of suppressed footsteps from some distant staircase. Such is the feeling in the desert, even in the midst of the caravan. The mighty solitude is seen: the dread silence is anticipated which will succeed to this brief transit of men, camels, and horses. Awe prevails even in the midst of society: but, if the traveller should loiter behind from fatigue, or be so imprudent as to ramble aside,—should he from any cause once lose sight of his party,—it is held that his chance is small of recovering their traces. And why? Not chiefly from the want of footmarks where the wind effaces all impressions in half-an-hour, or of eyemarks where all is one blank ocean of sand, but much more from the sounds or the visual appearances which are supposed to beset and to seduce all insulated wanderers.

Everybody knows the superstitions of the ancients about the *Nympholeptoi*, those who had seen Pan and the nymphs. But far more awful are the existing superstitions throughout Asia and Africa as to the perils of those who are phantom-haunted in the wildnerness. The old Venetian traveller, Marco Polo, states them well: he speaks, indeed, of the Eastern or Tartar deserts,—the steppes which stretch from European Russia to the footsteps of the Chinese throne; but exactly the same creed prevails amongst the Arabs, from Bagdad to Suez and Cairo—from Rosetta to Tunis—Tunis to Timbuctoo or Mequinez. "If, during the daytime," says he, "any person should remain behind until the caravan is no "longer in sight, he hears himself unexpectedly called to by "name, and in a voice with which he is familiar. Not "doubting that the voice proceeds from some of his comrades,

" the unhappy man is beguiled from the right direction ; " and, soon finding himself utterly confounded as to the " path, he roams about in distraction, until he perishes " miserably. If, on the other hand, this perilous separation " of himself from the caravan should happen at night, he is " sure to hear the uproar of a great cavalcade a mile or two " to the right or left of the true track. He is thus seduced " on the one side, and at break of day finds himself far " removed from man. Nay, even at noonday, it is well " known that grave and respectable men, to all appearance, " will come up to a particular traveller, will bear the look of a " friend, and will gradually lure him by earnest conversation " to a distance from the caravan ; after which the sounds of " men and camels will be heard continually at all points but " the true one ; whilst an insensible turning by the tenth of " an inch at each separate step from the true direction will " very soon suffice to set the traveller's face to the opposite " point of the compass from that which his safety requires, " and which his fancy represents to him as his real direction. " Marvellous, indeed, and almost passing belief, are the " stories reported of these desert phantoms, which are said at " times to fill the air with choral music from all kinds of " instruments, from drums, and the clash of arms : so that " oftentimes a whole caravan are obliged to close up their " open ranks, and to proceed in a compact line of march."

Lord Lindsay, in his very interesting Travels through Egypt, Edom, &c.,[1] agrees with Warton in supposing (and probably enough) that from this account of the desert traditions in Marco Polo was derived Milton's fine passage in " Comus " :—

> " Of calling shapes, and beckoning shadows dire,
> And aery tongues that syllable men's names
> On sands, and shores, and desert wildernesses."

But the most remarkable of these desert superstitions, as suggested by the mention of Lord Lindsay, is one which that young nobleman, in some place which I cannot immediately find, has noticed, and which he was destined by a personal calamity immediately to illustrate. Lord Lindsay quotes

[1] *Letters on Egypt, Edom, and the Holy Land,* 1838.—M.

from Vincent le Blanc an anecdote of a man in his own caravan, the companion of an Arab merchant, who disappeared in a mysterious manner. Four Moors, with a retaining fee of 100 ducats, were sent in quest of him, but came back *re infecta*. "And 'tis uncertain," adds Le Blanc, "whether he was swallowed up in the sands, or met his "death by any other misfortune; as it often happens, by the "relation of a merchant then in our company, who told us "that, two years before, traversing the same journey, a "comrade of his, going a little aside from the company, saw "three men, who called him by his name; and one of them, "to his thinking, favoured very much his companion; and, "as he was about to follow them, his real companion calling "him to come back to his company, he found himself "deceived by the others, and thus was saved. And all "travellers in these parts hold that in the desert are many "such phantasms seen, that strive to seduce the traveller." Thus far it is the traveller's own fault, warned as he is continually by the extreme anxiety of the Arab leaders or guides with respect to all who stray to any distance, if he is duped or enticed by these pseudo-men: though, in the case of Lapland dogs, who ought to have a surer instinct of detection for counterfeits, we know from Sir Capel de Broke and others that they are continually wiled away by the wolves who roam about the nightly encampments of travellers. But there is a secondary disaster, according to the Arab superstition, awaiting those whose eyes are once opened to the discernment of these phantoms. To see them, or to hear them, even where the traveller is careful to refuse their lures, entails the certainty of death in no long time. This is another form of that universal faith which made it impossible for any man to survive a bodily commerce, by whatever sense, with a spiritual being. We find it in the Old Testament, where the expression, "I have seen God, and shall die," means simply a supernatural being; since no Hebrew believed it possible for a nature purely human to sustain for a moment the sight of the Infinite Being. We find the same faith amongst ourselves, in the case of *doppelgänger* becoming apparent to the sight of those whom they counterfeit, and in many other varieties. We modern

Europeans, of course, laugh at these superstitions; though, as La Place remarks ("Essai sur les Probabilités"), any case, however apparently incredible, if it is a recurrent case, is as much entitled to a fair valuation as if it had been more probable beforehand.[1] This being premised, we, who connect the superstition with the personal result, are more impressed by the fatal catastrophe to Mr. Ramsay than Lord Lindsay, who either failed to notice the *nexus* between the events, or possibly declined to put the case too forward in his reader's eye, from the solemnity of the circumstances, and the private interest to himself and his own family of the subsequent event. The case was this:—Mr. William Wardlaw Ramsay, the companion (and, I believe, relative) of Lord Lindsay, a man whose honourable character and whose intellectual accomplishments speak for themselves in the posthumous memorabilia of his travels published by Lord Lindsay, had seen an array of objects in the desert, which, by facts immediately succeeding, was demonstrated to have been a mere ocular *lusus*, or (according to the Arab notions) phantoms. During the absence from home of an Arab sheikh, who had been hired as conductor of Lord Lindsay's party, a hostile tribe (bearing the name of Tellaheens) had assaulted and pillaged his tents. Report of this had reached the English travelling-party; it was known that the Tellaheens were still in motion, and for some days a hostile rencounter was looked for. At length, in crossing the well-known valley of the *Wada Araba*, that most ancient channel of communication between the Red Sea and Judea &c., Mr. Ramsay saw, to his own entire conviction, a party of horse moving amongst some sand-hills. Afterwards it became certain, from accurate

[1] "*Is as much entitled to a fair valuation, under the laws of induction, as if it had been more probable beforehand*":—One of the cases which La Place notices as entitled to a grave consideration, but which would most assuredly be treated as a trivial phenomenon, unworthy of attention, by commonplace spectators, is, when a run of success, with no apparent cause, takes place on heads or tails (*pile ou croix*). Most people dismiss such a case as pure accident. But La Place insists on its being duly valued as a fact, however unaccountable as an effect. So, again, if, in a large majority of experiences like those of Lord Lindsay's party in the desert death should follow, such a phenomenon is as well entitled to its separate valuation as any other.

information, that this must have been an ocular illusion. It was established that no horseman *could* have been in that neighbourhood at that time. Lord Lindsay records the case as an illustration of "that spiritualised tone the imagination naturally assumes in scenes presenting so little sympathy with the ordinary feelings of humanity"; and he reports the case in these pointed terms:—"Mr. Ramsay, a man of remarkably "strong sight, and by no means disposed to superstitious "credulity, distinctly saw a party of horse moving among "the sand-hills; and I do not believe he was ever able to "divest himself of that impression." No: and, according to Arab interpretation, very naturally so; for, according to their faith, he really *had* seen the horsemen, — phantom horsemen certainly, but still objects of sight. The sequel remains to be told. By the Arabian hypothesis, Mr. Ramsay had but a short time to live—he was under a secret summons to the next world; and, accordingly, in a few weeks after this, whilst Lord Lindsay had gone to visit Palmyra, Mr. Ramsay died at Damascus.

This was a case exactly corresponding to the Pagan *nympholepsis*: he had seen the beings whom it is not lawful to see and live. Another case of eastern superstition, not less determined, and not less remarkably fulfilled, occurred some years before to Dr. Madden, who travelled pretty much in the same route as Lord Lindsay. The doctor, as a phrenologist, had been struck with the very singular conformation of a skull which he saw amongst many others on an altar in some Syrian convent. He offered a considerable sum in gold for it; but it was by repute the skull of a saint; and the monk with whom Dr. Madden attempted to negotiate not only refused his offers, but protested that even for the doctor's sake, apart from the interests of the convent, he could not venture on such a transfer: for that, by the tradition attached to it, the skull would endanger any vessel carrying it from the Syrian shore; the vessel might escape, but it would never succeed in reaching any but a Syrian harbour. After this, for the credit of our country, which stands so high in the East, and should be so punctiliously tended by all Englishmen, I am sorry to record that Dr. Madden (though otherwise a man of scrupulous honour)

yielded to the temptation of substituting for the saint's skull another less remarkable from his own collection. With this saintly relic he embarked on board a Grecian ship; was alternately pursued and met by storms the most violent; larboard and starboard, on every quarter, he was buffeted; the wind blew from every point of the compass; the doctor honestly confesses that he often wished this baleful skull back in safety on the quiet altar from which he took it; and, finally, after many days of anxiety, he was too happy in finding himself quietly restored to some oriental port, from which he secretly vowed never again to sail with a saint's skull, or with any skull, however remarkable phrenologically, that had not been paid for in an open market.

Thus I have pursued, through many of its most memorable sections, the spirit of the miraculous as it moulded and gathered itself in the superstitions of Paganism; and I have shown that, in the modern superstitions of Christianity, or of Mahometanism (often enough borrowed from Christian sources), there is a pretty regular correspondence. Speaking with a reference to the strictly popular belief, it cannot be pretended for a moment that miraculous agencies are slumbering in modern ages. For one superstition of that nature which the Pagans had, we can produce twenty. And if, from the collation of numbers, we should pass to that of quality, it is a matter of notoriety that from the very philosophy of Paganism, and its slight root in the terrors or profounder mysteries of spiritual nature, no comparison could be sustained for a moment between the true religion and any mode whatever of the false. Ghosts I have purposely omitted, because that idea is so peculiarly Christian [1] as to reject all counterparts or affinities from other modes of the supernatural. The Christian ghost is too awful a presence, and with too large a substratum of the real, the impassioned, the human, for my present purposes. I deal chiefly with the wilder and more

[1] "*Because that idea is so peculiarly Christian*":—One reason, additional to the main one, why the idea of a ghost could not be conceived or reproduced by Paganism lies in the Pagan fourfold resolution of the human nature at death: viz. into—1, *corpus;* 2, *manes;* 3, *spiritus;* 4, *anima.* After such a dispersion of its separate elements no restitution of the total nature or consciousness was possible.

aerial forms of superstition: not so far off from fleshly nature as the purely allegoric; not so near as the penal, the purgatorial, the penitential. In this middle class, "Gabriel's hounds," the "phantom ship," the gloomy legends of the charcoal-burners in the German forests, and the local or epichorial superstitions from every district of Europe, come forward by thousands, attesting the high activity of the miraculous and the hyperphysical instincts, even in this generation, wheresoever the voice of the people makes itself heard.

But in Pagan times, it will be objected, the popular superstitions blended themselves with the highest political functions, gave a sanction to national counsels, and oftentimes gave their starting-point to the very primary movements of the state. Prophecies, omens, miracles, all worked concurrently with senates or princes; whereas in modern days, says Charles Lamb, the witch who takes her pleasure with the moon, and summons Beelzebub to her sabbaths, nevertheless trembles before the beadle, and hides herself from the constable. Now, as to the witch, even the horrid Canidia of Horace, or the more dreadful Erichtho of Lucan, seems hardly to have been much respected in any era. But, for the other modes of the supernatural, they have entered into more frequent combinations with state functions and state movements in our modern ages than in the classical age of Paganism. Look at prophecies, for example. The Romans had a few obscure oracles afloat, and they had the Sibylline books under the state seal. These books, in fact, had been kept so long that, like port wine superannuated, they had lost their flavour and body.[1] On the other hand, look at

[1] "*Like port wine superannuated, the Sibylline books had lost their flavour and body*":—There is an allegoric description in verse, by a modern poet, of an ice-house, in which Winter is described as a captive, &c. It is memorable on this account, that a brother poet mistook it (from not understanding the allegorical expressions), either sincerely or maliciously, for a description of the house-dog. Now, this little anecdote seems to embody the poor Sibyl's history: from a stern icy sovereign, some grand abstraction of frost with a petrific mace, she lapsed into an old toothless mastiff. She continued to snore in her ancient kennel for above a thousand years. The last person who attempted to stir her up with a long pole, and to extract from her paralytic dreaming some growls or snarls against Christianity, was

France. Henry the historian,[1] speaking of the fifteenth century, describes it as a national infirmity of the English to be prophecy-ridden. Perhaps there never was any foundation for this as an exclusive remark; but assuredly not in the next century. There had been amongst us British, from the twelfth century, Thomas of Ercildoune in the north,[2] and many monkish local prophets for every part of the island; but latterly England had no terrific prophet, unless, indeed, Nixon of the Vale Royal in Cheshire, who uttered his dark oracles sometimes with a merely Cestrian, sometimes with a national, reference.[3] Whereas in France, throughout the sixteenth century, every principal event was foretold successively, with an accuracy that still shocks and confounds us. Francis I, who opens the century (and by many is held to open the book of *modern* history, as distinguished from the middle or *feudal* history), had the battle of Pavia foreshown to him, not by name, but in its results—by his own Spanish captivity—by the exchange for his own children upon a frontier river of Spain—finally, by his own disgraceful death, through an infamous disease conveyed to him under a deadly circuit of revenge. This king's son, Henry II, read some years *before* the event a description of that tournament, on the marriage of the Scottish Queen with his eldest son, Francis II, which proved fatal to himself through the awkwardness of the Comte de Montgomery and his own obstinacy. After this, and, I believe, a little after the brief reign of Francis II, arose Nostradamus, the great prophet of the age.[4] All the children of Henry II and of Catherine de Medici, one after the other, died in circumstances of suffering and horror; and Nostradamus pursued the whole with

Aurelian, in a moment of public panic. But the thing was past all tampering. The poor creature could neither be kicked nor coaxed into vitality.

[1] Dr. Robert Henry (1718-1790), author of a *History of Great Britain*, published in successive volumes between 1771 and 1785.—M.

[2] Thomas of Erceldoune, called *Thomas the Rhymer*, reputed author of many legendary Scottish prophecies, lived in the latter part of the thirteenth century.—M.

[3] Under the name Anthony Nixon, Lowndes mentions an old and popular chap-book, called *Cheshire Prophecy*.—M.

[4] Michael Nostradamus (1503-1566), French astrologer and physician.—M.

allusive omens. Charles IX, though the authoriser of the Bartholomew Massacre, was the least guilty of his party, and the only one who manifested a dreadful remorse. Henry III, the last of the brothers, died, as the reader will remember, by assassination. The youngest brother—viz. the Duke of Alençon, the suitor of our Queen Elizabeth, the same who, in his later days, after his brother Henry had become a king, took the title of Duke of Anjou—died in more abject misery even than the rest of his family. And all these tragic successions of events are still to be read, more or less dimly prefigured, in verses of which I will not here discuss the dates. Suffice it that many authentic historians attest the good faith of the prophet. And, finally, with respect to the first of the Bourbon dynasty, Henry IV, who succeeded upon the assassination of his brother-in-law, Henry III, we have the peremptory assurance of Sully and other Protestants, countersigned by writers both historical and controversial, that not only was he prepared by many warnings for his own tragical death—not only was the day, the hour, prefixed—not only was an almanack sent to him in which the bloody summer's day of 1610 was pointed out to his attention in bloody colours —but the mere record of the king's last afternoon shows, beyond a doubt, the extent and the punctual limitation of his anxieties within a circuit of six hours. In fact, it is to this attitude of listening expectation in the king, and breathless waiting for the blow, that Schiller alludes in that fine speech of Wallenstein to his sister where he notices the funeral knells that sounded continually in Henry's ears, and, above all, his prophetic instinct that caught from a far distance the sound of his murderer's motions, and could distinguish amidst all the tumult of a mighty capital those stealthy steps

> "Which even then were seeking him
> Throughout the streets of Paris."

I, for my part, profess not to admire Henry IV of France, whose secret and real character is best learned from the confidential report made by Sir G. Carew to the Council or to the Foreign Secretary of Queen Elizabeth during the two or three latter years of her reign. But one thing I have

always very sincerely admired in him—viz. his courageous resignation to the appointments of Heaven, in dismissing his guards, as feeling that against a danger so domestic and so mysterious all fleshly arms were vain. This has always struck me as the most like magnanimity of anything in his very theatrical life.[1]

Passing to our own country, and to the times immediately in succession, we fall upon some striking prophecies, not verbal but symbolic, if we turn from the broad highway of public histories to the by-paths of private memorials. Either Clarendon it is, in his Life (not his public History), or else Laud, who mentions an anecdote connected with the coronation of Charles I (the son-in-law of the murdered Bourbon) which threw a gloom upon the spirits of the royal friends, already saddened by the dreadful pestilence which inaugurated the reign of this ill-fated prince, levying a tribute of one life in sixteen from the population of the English metropolis. The anecdote is this:—At the coronation of Charles, it was discovered that all London could not furnish the quantity of purple velvet required for the royal robes and the furniture of the throne. What was to be done? Decorum required that the furniture should be all *en suite*. Nearer than Genoa no considerable addition could be expected. That would impose a delay of several weeks. Upon mature consideration, and chiefly of the many private interests that would suffer amongst the multitudes whom such a solemnity had called up from the country, it was resolved to robe the king in *white* velvet.[2] But this, as it afterwards occurred, was the colour in which victims were arrayed. And thus, it was alleged, did the king's council establish an augury of

[1] By the way, it seems quite impossible for the stern and unconditional sceptic upon all modes of supernatural communication to reconcile his own opinions with the circumstantial report of Henry's last hours, as gathered from Sully and others. That he was profoundly sensible of the danger that brooded over his person is past all denying: now, whence was this sense derived?

[2] I find nothing of this in Clarendon's *Life*, and have not Laud at hand; but in *Whitelock's Memorials*, for the year 1625, there is this paragraph—"The king's coronation was performed with the usual ceremonies and solemnities by Bishop Laud: only the king's robe was white satin, because (as some say) purple could not be then had."—M.

evil. Three other ill omens, of some celebrity, occurred to Charles I: viz. on occasion of creating his son Charles a knight of the Bath; secondly, at Oxford, some years after; and thirdly, at the bar of that tribunal which sat in judgment upon him.[1]

The reign of his second son, James II, the next reign that could be considered an unfortunate reign, was inaugurated by the same evil omens. The day selected for the coronation (in 1685) was a day memorable for England: it was St. George's day, the 23d of April—and entitled, even on a separate account, to be held a sacred day, as the birth-day of Shakspere in 1564, and his death-day in 1616.[2] The king saved a sum of sixty thousand pounds by cutting off the ordinary cavalcade from the Tower of London to Westminster. Even this was imprudent. It is well known that amongst the lowest class of the English there is an obstinate prejudice (though unsanctioned by law) with respect to the obligation imposed by the ceremony of coronation. So long as this ceremony is delayed or mutilated, they fancy that their obedience is a matter of mere prudence, liable to be enforced by arms, but not consecrated either by law or by religion. The change made by James was, therefore, highly imprudent: shorn of its antique traditionary usages, the yoke of conscience was lightened at a moment when it required a double ratification. Neither was this mutilation of the ancient ceremonial called for on motives of economy, since James was unusually rich. This voluntary arrangement was, therefore, a bad beginning; but the accidental omens were worse. They are thus reported by Blennerhassett ("History of England to the end of George I," vol. iv, p. 1760, printed at Newcastle-upon-Tyne: 1751). "The crown, being too little for the "king's head, was often in a tottering condition, and like to "fall off." Even this was observed attentively by spectators of the most opposite feelings. But there was another simultaneous omen, which affected the Protestant enthusiasts, and

[1] The last of these ill omens was the falling-off of the gold head of his staff as he leant on it on the first day of his trial in Westminster Hall.—M.

[2] On this point see in De Quincey's biographic sketch of Shakespeare, *ante*, Vol. IV, pp. 17-19.—M.

the superstitious, whether Catholic or Protestant, still more alarmingly. "The same day the king's arms, pompously "painted in the great altar window of a London church, "suddenly fell down without apparent cause, and broke to "pieces, whilst the rest of the window remained standing." Blennerhassett mutters the dark terrors which possessed himself and others. "These," says he, "were reckoned ill omens to the king."

In France, as the dreadful criminality of the French sovereigns through the seventeenth century began to tell powerfully, and reproduce itself in the miseries and tumults of the French populace through the eighteenth century, it is interesting to note the omens which unfolded themselves at intervals. A volume might be written upon them. The Bourbons renewed the picture of that fatal house which in Thebes offered to the Grecian observers the spectacle of successive auguries emerging from darkness through three generations *a plusieurs reprises*. Everybody knows the fatal pollution by calamity of the marriage pomps on the reception of Marie Antoinette in Paris: the numbers who perished are still spoken of obscurely as to the amount, and with shuddering awe for the unparalleled horrors standing in the background of this fatal reign. But in the Life of Goethe is mentioned a still more portentous (though more shadowy) omen. In the pictorial decorations of the arras which adorned the pavilion raised for the reception of the princess on the French frontier, the first objects which met the Austrian archduchess, on being hailed as Dauphiness, was a succession of the most tragic groups from the most awful section of the Grecian theatre.[1] The next alliance of the same kind between the same great empires, in the persons of Napoleon and the Archduchess Marie Louisa, was overshadowed by equally unhappy omens (viz. at the ball given in celebration of that marriage by the Austrian Ambassador), and, as we all remember, with the same unhappy results, within a brief period of five years.

[1] This was at Strasburg. Details are given by Goethe in the Ninth Book of his Autobiography; where there is mention also of the appalling subsequent street-accident in Paris at the entry of Marie Antoinette into that capital.—M.

Or, if we should resort to the fixed and monumental, rather than to the fleeting, auguries of great nations—such, for instance, as were embodied in those *Palladia*, or protecting talismans, which capital cities, whether Pagan or Christian, glorified through a period of twenty-five hundred years —we shall find a long succession of these enchanted pledges, from the earliest precedent of Troy (whose palladium was undoubtedly a talisman) down to that equally memorable one, bearing the same name, at Western Rome. We may pass, by a vast transition of two and a-half millennia, to that great talisman of Constantinople, the triple serpent (having perhaps an original reference to the Mosaic serpent of the wilderness which healed the infected by the simple act of looking upon it). This great consecrated talisman, venerated equally by Christian, by Pagan, and by Mahometan, was struck on the head by Mahomet II, on that same day, May 29 of 1453, in which he mastered by storm this glorious city, the bulwark of Eastern Christendom, and the immediate rival of his own European throne at Adrianople. But mark the superfetation of omens—omen supervening upon omen, augury engrafted upon augury. The hour was a sad one for Christianity. Just 720 years before the western horn of Islam had been rebutted in France, not by Frenchmen, but chiefly by Germans, under Charles Martel. But now it seemed as though another horn, even more vigorous, was preparing to assault Christendom from the eastern quarter. At this epoch, in the very hour of triumph, when the last of the Cæsars had glorified his station, and sealed his testimony by martyrdom, the fanatical sultan, riding to his stirrups in blood, and wielding that iron mace which had been his sole weapon, as well as cognisance, through the battle, advanced to the column round which the triple serpent soared spirally upwards. He smote the brazen talisman ; he shattered one head ; he left it mutilated as the record of his great revolution ; but crush it, destroy it, he did not—as a symbol prefiguring the fortunes of Mahometanism : his people noticed that in the critical hour of fate, which stamped the sultan's acts with efficacy through ages, he had been prompted by his secret genius only to "scotch the snake," not to crush it. Afterwards the fatal hour was gone by ; and this imperfect

augury has since concurred traditionally with the Mahometan prophecies about the Adrianople gate of Constantinople to depress the ultimate hopes of Islam in the midst of all its insolence. The very haughtiest of the Mussulmans believe that the gate is already in existence through which the red Giaours (the *Russi*) shall pass to the conquest of Stamboul, and that everywhere, in Europe at least, the hat of Frangistan is destined to surmount the turban, the crescent to go down before the cross.

Corrigendum in footnote at p. 177.—The paper on Judas Iscariot appeared first in the Edinburgh monthly periodical, called *Titan*, into which *Hogg's Weekly Instructor* was transmuted after 1856.—M.

END OF VOL. VIII

Printed by R. & R. Clark, *Edinburgh*.